



F. J. A. C.  
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# Martin Luther's

COMPLETE

COMMENTARY

ON THE

FIRST TWENTY-TWO PSALMS.

NOW

FIRST TRANSLATED,

BY THE REV. HENRY COLE,

OF CLARE HALL, CAMBRIDGE,

AND LATE LECTURER OF WOOLWICH, KENT.

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The memory of the just is blessed : but the name of the wicked shall rot. Prov. x. 7.  
He being dead yet speaketh. Heb. xi. 4.

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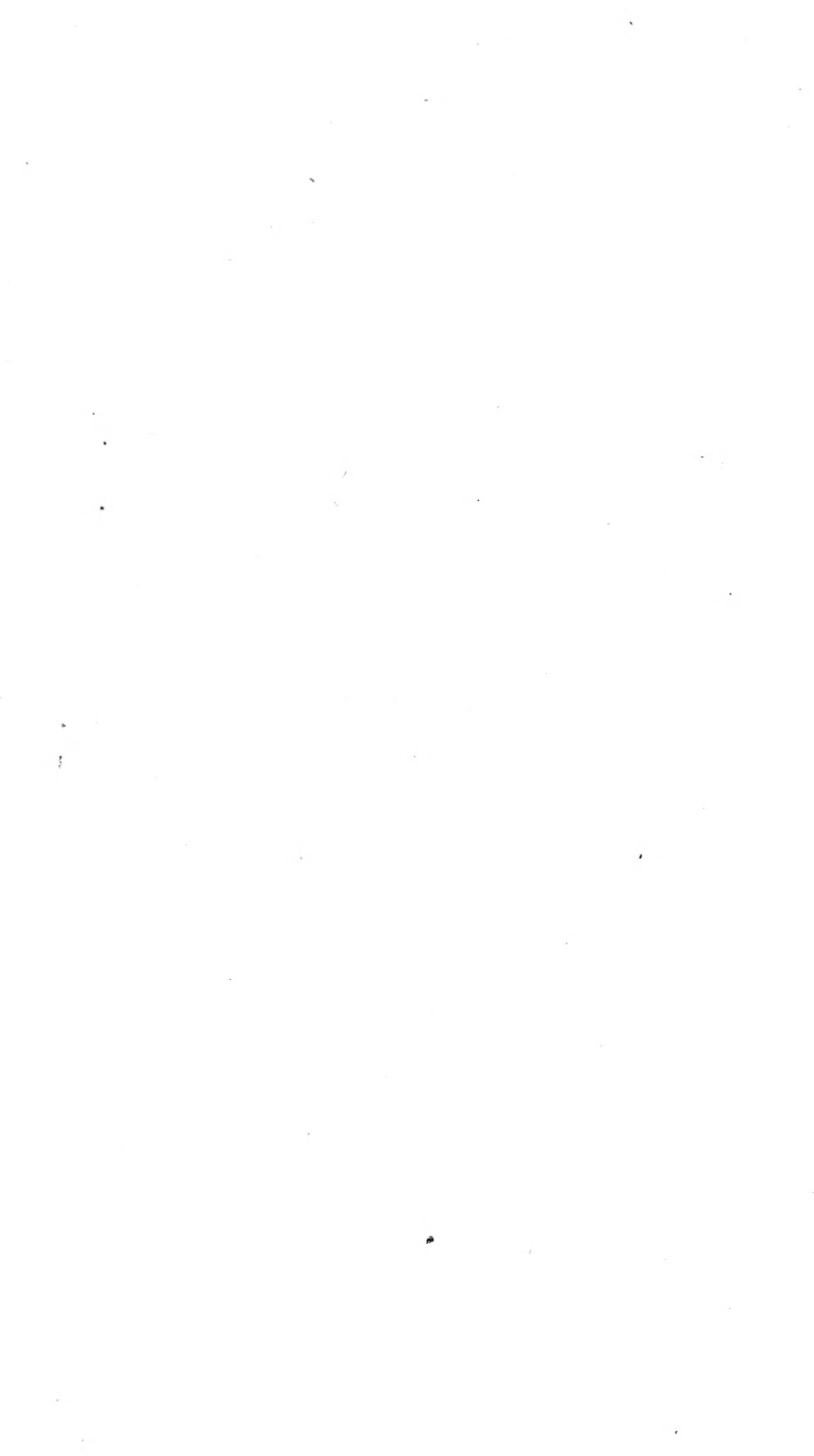
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THE  
PIOUS AND LEARNED  
COMMENTARY  
OF  
**Martin Luther**  
ON THE  
FIRST TWENTY-TWO PSALMS.

VOL. IV.

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# COMMENTARY

ON THE

## FIRST TWENTY-TWO PSALMS.

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### PSALM XII.

TO VICTORY. UPON THE EIGHTH. A PSALM OF  
DAVID.

CONCERNING this eight-chorded harp we have spoken at sufficient length under Psalm vi. we shall therefore proceed with the text.

Ver. 1.—*Save me, O Lord, for the saint faileth, for truths are diminished from the sons of men.*

It is angry love that speaks in this Psalm: which we call, zeal for God: even as the Apostle also, 2 Cor. xi. 2, speaking with the same feelings says, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy.” For he is speaking against those who are set over the ministry of the Word among the people of God, and who are teaching their own words to the great destruction of souls, instead of the Word of God; thus abusing their power of teaching, and corrupting the pure and sincere doctrine of the divine law. Such as these also David had to bear with in his time, and he foresaw that there would be others of the same kind at the time of the coming of Christ: against these characters Christ inveighs, Matt. xxiii. saying, “Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” And again, Luke xi. 52, “Woe unto you lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of

knowledge, (that is, the power of teaching :) ye enter not in yourselves and them that were entering in ye hindered."

Whence it is manifest, that this Psalm does not treat of heretics nor of persecutors : unless we consider them as the heretics who catch souls by ceremonies and particular works of their own invention, neglecting all the while, faith in God, which ought to be taught at the same time. And of this sort there are many at the present day, and will be still more if the world shall remain, such as our theologians, our lawyers, our religious ones, our popes ; who are destroyed themselves, and destroy others by human science and traditions ; that is, by their speculations and their moral works. Nor is the prophet thus indignant alone because these teachers are the most vile, but because they are so many, nay, are almost the only teachers there are to be found ; so much so, that there is scarcely any one left who teaches what is right. Whereby it is shewn, that the Psalm itself has reference to some most corrupt age, such as that in the time of Christ, and such as that in which we now live.

Hence it is, that David begins with so much zeal, saying, "Save me, O Lord, for the saint faileth." As if he said in the words of Micah vii. 1—4, "Woe is me ! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage : there is no cluster to eat : my soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men ; they all lie in wait for blood : they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward ; and the great man he uttereth his mischievous desire : so they wrap it up. The best of them is a brier, the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge."

In which words, the prophet not only expresses the same feelings as those which are evinced in this Psalm, but also attacks their external show under which they hide all these evils, and wish them to appear good : for the whole is spoken in the spirit, and therefore can be



understood by faith only. For many are called merciful men, that is, saints, or men of grace, and men of mercy, when they are not so : but a faithful man, that is, a man just and merciful by faith, who can find ? For this external appearance reigns so universally, and this water of the counsel of the wicked is so deep, and their thoughts so profound, that none but a wise man can fathom them : that is, none but the truly just can discern them : all others are deceived by their external appearance, their multitude, and their magnitude. And this destruction of the multitude greatly grieved the spirit of this prophet : which is the reason why he thus breaks out, (without any kind of preface, or any thing to gain the attention of the reader previously,) and entreats God for the salvation of the people.

The Hebrew has only *HOSIA* ; that is “ save,” or “ give salvation ;” not “ save *me*.” And the expression “ save,” or “ give salvation,” is much more forcible than “ save *me*.” Thus the prophet, filled with ardent zeal on account of the people who are perishing, breaks out without any preface, into an earnest and fervent prayer, imploring help of God.

“ Saint” in this place is *HASID*, which word Hieronymus translated, Psalm iv. ‘ merciful.’ ‘ The Lord hath made wonderful his merciful one ;’ that is, ‘ him who has obtained mercy,’ or, who is justified by the grace of God, who is saved by faith ; and not by his own works or strength, nor by those of any other men.

“ Truths are diminished from the sons of men :” that is, truths are not to be found among men ; that is, fidelity or faithfulness is not to be found. For the Hebrew language can say, ‘ there are not faiths in men,’ and also, ‘ God is our saving :’ where we say ‘ the God of our salvation,’ and ‘ there is no more faith among men :’ according to the common saying of the ancients, ‘ No trust can be placed any where.’ But we can never use ‘ truth’ in the plural number. These things I say, that no one might understand that it is said that truths are perished ‘ *from*’ or ‘ *by*’ the sons, as if the sons of men had diminished the truths ; though this also is true.

But they should know that the preposition 'from,' or 'by' (*a*) ought to have been rendered 'among,' or 'from among,' or 'out of,' (*inter*, or *de*, or *ex*,) that the sense might be the same as that of Isaiah lvii. 1, 2, "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away and none considereth: for the righteous is taken away from the face of iniquity." And according to that also which we adduced from Micah vii. 2, "The good man is perished out of the earth," &c. For David wishes to say, that there is no longer faith among men, (which is what the Hebrews understand by the term 'truth,') and that the men who are justified by faith have ceased: but that, self-justifying hypocrites, who destroy both themselves and others by their own strength, their own works, their own laws, and their own merits, under the great name and show of salvation, abounded every where.

The powerful feeling of the Psalmist here leads him to an hyperbole, or strained mode of expression. There never is a time when there are no saints upon earth, and no believers in Christ: and yet he says, 'The saint has ceased and the just are at an end, and those who please God are no more.' But in this figurative language we all complain at this day; saying, that there is no faithfulness among men, and that all things are carried on by deceit. And this unbelief is a proof and an argument of the internal fidelity or faithfulness being extinguished: and thus the tree is known by its fruits. For he that is faithful to God, is faithful also to man: for without faith and the grace of God, it is impossible but a man will seek those things which are his own; that is, he will be unfaithful unto man also. And hence, when Micah vii. had said "there is none upright among men," he immediately afterwards sets forth the fruits of this bad tree, saying, "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide, keep the door of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are those of his own house." Yet, though the wicked are

such, they would appear to be any thing but such characters.

Ver. 2.—*They speak vain things; every one to his neighbour deceitful lips; they speak with a heart and a heart.*

The punctuation is in the Hebrew put thus, after “deceitful lips” (*labia dolosa*.) Wherefore, the question must be asked, what grammatical construction can we make out of the expression “deceitful lips?” For the *labia dolosa* cannot agree with “they speak or have spoken,” (*locuti sunt*) it must have been *locuta sunt*, if we would keep to the text of our translator. Unless you would say, that the *labia dolosa* is put in the accusative figuratively; that is, they speak deceitful words coming forth from their lips. But it might be rendered “they speak with deceitful lips.” This ambiguity, I think, gives us the liberty of dividing the verse into three members or clauses, and rendering the Hebrew thus, ‘They speak vanity; there is a flattering lip in every man to his neighbour; they speak with a heart and a heart.’ That is, every teacher teaches vanity, every man has a flattering lip towards his neighbour, and they all speak with a double heart.

First, then, we have here, “They speak vain things,” or vanity: that is things to no purpose, and which profit nothing unto salvation: which things, however, as we have frequently observed, appear to them to be most useful and most profitable. And that David is not here speaking of private conversations and vain talk, but concerning the ministry of the Word, is manifest from that which follows, where he contrasts the Word of the Lord with these vain-speaking deceivers of minds. And that expression, “Every man to his neighbour deceitful lips,” is spoken after the Hebrew figurative manner of speech: like that Song iii. 9. 10. ‘Behold his bed which is Solomon’s: threescore valiant men are about it: a man, his sword upon his thigh:’ where we say, “every man with his sword upon his thigh.” And so also, it is said here, ‘They speak vanity, every man to his neighbour deceit-

ful lips;’ where we should say, and every one has a deceitful lip towards his neighbour: that is, every one flattereth his neighbour when he does not speak the Word of the cross truly: for they would not persuade men to their vanities if they did not speak flattering and pleasing things. For what is here translated deceitful, and Psalm v. ‘they acted deceitfully,’ Hieronymus in the latter place renders, and ‘they speak lightly with their tongue:’ that is, lightly, softly, and flatteringly.

These are they who tickle men’s itching ears. And Paul says, after the manner of this Psalm, that there should not be some only of such a description, but that they should be ‘heaped:’ that is, multiplied, and that the saints should fail: concerning whom enough has been said, Psalm v. and ix. But yet, enough cannot be said, this depravity of nature is so deep and profound, and especially as concerned in these spiritual things, and in all things which pertain unto God: for the wisdom of the flesh is not subject unto God, nor indeed can be, Rom. vi.

And this “heart and a heart,” may be referred to the same person: for he is said to speak with a double heart, who thinks one thing and feignedly says another: and it is in this way that I would have the present passage understood. But I would also refer it to different persons. For, as by the pure Word of God, Christ makes us to be of one mind in a house, Psalm lxxviii. and brethren to dwell together in unity, Psalm cxxxiii. and as the heart and soul of them that believe on the Lord are one, Acts iv. (for there is but one faith, and one Lord, Ephes. iv. :) so, on the contrary, with the wicked, as the one true faith is the great thing wanting, it is impossible that they should be of one heart; they must necessarily abound in party dissensions and pursuits among each other: for there never arose any one sect, but many more arose out of it. Thus in the time of Christ, the synagogue had pharisees, sadducees, and esseeans: the Arians gave rise to the Eunomians, and Macedonians: the Donatists gave birth to the Maximinians. And at this day, Aristotle has given existence to the different followers of Scotus, Thomas, and Occan. Hence it was

that the Apostle said, Heb. xiii. 9, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." And such he describes in another place as being "driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine," and, as "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." In all such there is never one heart; though they all agree in this,—to speak vain things; and every one flatters his own party, and endeavours to confirm his own opinions and dogmas. Hence, I consider that this division of sects is distinguished by this division of heart: as we have it Daniel xi. 27, where he describes the heart of two kings speaking lies at the same table.

And therefore David uses the plural number that he might not be thought to speak of any one particular sect: for in the 10th Psalm, which respects ANTICHRIST, he speaks almost wholly in the plural number.—And here the force lies in these words, "with a heart and a heart;" because as to outward appearance they seem to unite together; that is, against the truth. So Psalm ii. we have it, "The kings of the earth stood up and the elders took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed:" which characters nevertheless were the most opposed to each other in their different sects; that is, pharisees and sadduces, Romans, gentiles, and others.

This, Sampson prefigured in his foxes, whose tails he tied together while their faces were turned a different way. For the faces of these foxes represent the state of the wicked as they are in the sight of God and of the Holy Spirit; before whom they are most factious and contentious. And their tails, which are their extremities, represent their appearance in the sight of men; where they all take counsel and unite together in the fire of persecution to destroy the standing corn of the earth; that is, to destroy the doctrine and works of faith, or of the Spirit. And it is concerning these that Hosea speaks x. 2, "Their heart is divided; now shall they perish:" where he had just before said, ver. 1, "According to the multitude of his fruit, Israel hath increased the altars:" that is, he is divided into sects. And this it is that causes the prophet to exclaim, 'That the saint is failed:'

because there are so many sects, and all set against the truth and devouring the people of God. And who can resist all, when resistance is scarcely to be made against one? And thus it is with the church at this day, which is continually divided and lacerated by new-found sects, and by the old ones being increased into innumerable parts; while, in the mean time, the unity of love is utterly disregarded.

Ver. 3.—*Let the Lord destroy all deceitful lips; and the tongue that speaketh proud things.*

For, unless God destroy these locusts, palmer-worms, and canker-worms, as Joel i. 4, calls them, all the labour of the saints in such an attempt would be in vain. And it would have been more appropriate if our translator had rendered it, (which the Hebrew would allow him to do,) “The Lord shall cut off:” for the lips and tongue are sometimes cut off: because otherwise, as James says, no one of men can tame the tongue. But David here prays for a spiritual cutting off: which is, that the wicked being changed, (or removed from their office,) might teach something else; that is, the true wisdom of the cross.

But why was it not enough for him to say “deceitful lips,” (that is, vain and flattering lips?) Why does he add “all?” Why does he add this, but because he wished to have respect unto the multitude of these factions? And therefore he prays, that not the lips of one only, but of all these factions, and their flatteries might be cut off, because they all speak vain things. And our translator has rightly added the conjunction “and,” which is not in the Hebrew. And he has put also *linguam magniloquam*; which in the Hebrew is expressed by two words, ‘speaker of proud things,’ *locutricem magnorum*: which we are to understand, not only of great things, (as the wicked are wont to boast much,) but concerning pride, whereby they despise and oppress the doctrine of godliness, and boastingly establish their own.—And you may in this way interpret the fox’s tail, which is large and bushy, but yet has very little real flesh and substance, and is larger almost than the whole body, especially the head: so

the ungodly man is greater in his external pomp and appearance than he is in reality. And this animal, which is so remarkable for its cunning and craft, is not vainly used by the scriptures to represent the all-cunning and crafty wisdom of the flesh, which, when engaged in divine things and in the ministry, perpetrates all those enormities which are recorded in the scriptures.

Ver. 4.—*Who have said, We will magnify our tongues: our lips are from ourselves. Who is our Lord?*

David here explains what the proud-speaking tongue is, and what it says: that is, it speaks most proudly and contemptuously against the doctrine of the righteous. First, we have ‘Let us magnify:’ that is, Let us strengthen, establish, and confirm our doctrines: and on the other hand, (say they,) ‘Let us break their bands in sunder, and cast away their cords from us:’ let us destroy all that the godly build up, let us cast away their yoke from us: let us weaken and restrain their tongue: and let us draw over to our side the people, and the priests of the people. Not that they think that they are acting against the godly; for they imagine that they are doing God service, when they strengthen and confirm their proud-speaking tongue, and causing it to be heard by many, as being humble and sincere: so that God must here be left to have and execute judgment.

Then we have, “Our lips are from ourselves.” Which Hieronymus has rendered ‘are with ourselves.’ And Augustine, ‘in our own power.’ But I would rather render it ‘Our lips are our own:’ that there might be an emphasis in the latter pronoun ‘*our own*:’ whereby we are to understand them boasting of their power, and of having the key of knowledge. As if they said, Let no one hear any one besides us. We are the leaders and teachers of the people. They ought to listen to us, and, (as the Bulls of our proud popes now swell in the church,) we are the proper interpreters of the scriptures. It belongs to us to frame laws. It is our province to approve and to condemn every man’s sayings and writings. The power of the Key is with us

alone. So that by the pronoun "*our own*" is to be signified, that these ungodly take away from all the power of teaching, judging, and speaking, and arrogate and keep it to themselves alone: though they are, in reality, themselves the most ignorant and wicked of all men upon the face of the earth.

And this description I would apply to the men of our age and time; excepting that they are destitute of the appearance and the fox's tail: for the ignorance and impiety of them are all manifest enough to every one: but there is not one hair of the tail appearing, (that is, knowledge and sanctity,) except the name and reputation of them among the commonalty: and yet they rest more confidently in this name and reputation, than those of old did, who shined most brightly in the outward show of sanctity and knowledge. Hence, the state of the church in our day, is not a little worse than even the description contained in this verse: for now the lips are not denied to belong to the godly by the power of outward show, but by mere violence and tyranny.

Thus, when Christ was teaching, Matt. xxi. they said to him, "Tell us: by what authority doest thou these things?" As if they had said, The lips are not thine, but ours. The power of teaching belongs to us. And Acts v. 28, "Did we not straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name?" And thus did the priests of Anathoth to Jeremiah, Ahas to Isaiah, Amasiah to Amos; and the same did they to all the prophets, prohibiting them to speak; as if all the lips and the power of so doing belonged exclusively to them. Against whom all the true prophets inveighed; and though they allowed that power was on their side, yet they declared that they were all in error and all taught what was wrong. But to this they opposed arguments of precedency and of power also, saying, Jeremiah xviii. 18, "The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet." And this is precisely the same way in which they argue in the present day,—from the multitude of the learned, from the greatness of the hearers, from the length of



time, from the unfailing faith of St. Peter, from the universal custom of the church, &c. ; that is, of those who hear their doctrines, for those they call the church. Being puffed up with all these things, they say, The lips are ours, and they prevail: and with these most plausible and most specious reasonings, they catch the feelings of the people: just as those of old caught them with these three things. The law of the priests; the counsel of the wise; and the word of the prophet.

“Who is our Lord?”—The wicked do not say this, as denying that they have any Lord God; for they most especially boast in him against the godly, and under his name cover over all their own things and blaspheme those of the godly. But they say this, because they will not have the godly preferred before them and heard: for they will arrogate all the power of teaching to themselves. And this interrogative expression of theirs, contains a most manifest and most proud spirit of contention: for by it they persuade both themselves and all their own party that they act rightly: and they accuse all others of rashness: in this way.—Behold, we are the pastors of the people appointed from above, and we are they who must give an account for them: we alone have the power of teaching and of judging those things which are advanced by all others: we therefore ought to be heard by all, and to listen to no one. Because, (say they,) where the majority and eldership is, there must be the power of commanding, and these all others are of necessity bound to obey. But this new prophet, (say they,) lifting his mouth into heaven, wants to teach us: he detracts from all power, and pays no reverence to his elders (as we say at this day:) and he is not content with refusing to hear us, with being disobedient, and with detracting from our authority, but he wants to lift himself up above us, to make us his scholars, and to have absolute dominion over us.—Shall we therefore, (say they,) bear this? Shall we suffer this fellow to rule us? Shall he give us laws and directions? And as the Jews said to the blind son, John ix. “Dost thou teach us? and Psalm iv. “Who will shew us any

good?" And again, Gen. xxxvii. 8, the brethren of Joseph said to him, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" This, I say, is the all-swelling, all-furious pride of this Moab,—he accuses of pride and temerity the humble endeavours of the godly in their preaching of the Word of God: they say, it is done only to diminish or to repress the power of the great. And therefore, nothing of the truth must be spoken to these great ones at all; or if it be spoken, we must be charged with the crime of not speaking it for the truth's sake, but for the sake of insulting the majesty and diminishing the power of the great. Such a matter of necessity is it, that a messenger of the truth must be charged with offending either God, or the great among men.

Therefore, their saying "Who is our Lord?" is the same as if they had said, Cease thou to wish to teach us, and to refuse to hear our words, or to condemn what we advance, for by persevering therein, you will manifest that you want to become not only our master and teacher, but our Lord also. Thus Amaziah, Amos vii. 10, sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land." Behold here the prophet is charged with rebellion, and of usurping the dominion, only on account of having preached the truth. What then would be the consequence if all our divines (as they ought to do) should openly profess the truth.

Though it is also true that the ungodly refuse in truth the dominion of God, they pretend to the directly contrary. And this is manifest, in the first place, from this,—because every proud man, and all the prudent wisdom of the flesh, cannot be brought in subjection to God. And next, as they reject the messengers of the Word of God, and attempt to confound them, they thereby reject God who sent them. As Christ saith, Matt. x. 40, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he

that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." And again, 1 Sam. viii. 7, "For they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." And in the same manner, Jeremiah saith, v. 12, "For they have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine."

Hence, they most pertinaciously boast that they have God for their Lord; and yet, at the same time, with the most maddened pride reject him both in his servants and in his Word. And therefore, this specious show of humility in them, which makes the godly appear to be filled with pride, moves the commonalty to a hatred of true godliness. Wherefore the prophet commands us to look into the godly as they are in spirit: for these, where they are proud and despisers of the Word of the cross, they say, "Who is our Lord?" how much soever they may outwardly sound forth the praises of God, by their sayings, 'Glory to God alone.' 'In the name of the Lord,' &c.

*Ver. 5.—For the misery of the needy, for the sighing of the poor, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety; I will act confidently in him.*

Of this one verse we have made two. It would have been better to have rendered, instead of misery, destruction, that it might apply to the former verse, where the Psalmist had said that the saints had failed, and that truths were diminished, or were finished; that is, were destroyed; even unto these low remnants, for the "sighing" of whom the Lord says, that he will "arise." Hence therefore, it is certain that all the saints had not failed, and that it was a strained and hyperbolical expression in the first verse. The prophet, therefore, consoles himself by faith in the promise of God; being assured that he will visit the proud contempt of the Word of God, and the desolation of the saints, and of the truth, and that he will save his people: as the following will shew.

We have often observed already, that the saints of God are called in the scriptures *ÆNYM* and *ÆBIONIM*;

that is, poor and needy : on which account they are held in great contempt by the proud ; are suspected of aiming at power and mastership over them ; and are hated as rebels, irreverend, and disobedient, (as they are called.)

What it is for the Lord to arise, we have shewn already, Psalm iii. ; that is, a displaying of his power, ‘ Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God.’ And so here we have “ I will arise and set him in safety.” Nor is it without weight that David adds, “ saith the Lord :” for thereby the divine promise is commended to us to raise up our faith and hope in an affliction of this kind. For there is nothing more precious in the whole scripture than the promise of God ; for if there were no promise, there would be no place, nor ground, either for prayer, for works, for faith, nay nor for our life, nor for any thing else. For it is the promise of God that sustains and comforts us in all straits of the flesh and of the spirit.

Hieronymus renders it thus, ‘ I will set in safety their help.’ But I know not what he means by “ their help,” for the Hebrew does not seem to have any such thing : and Hieronymus himself translates the same word Psalm x. “ despises.” For my part, I know not what to say here, but I will give the best rendering that my mind affords. According to my mind, “ I will act confidently,” is, in the Hebrew, exactly the same expression as that which we find Psalm x. and which is there rendered “ shall rule over ;” that is, “ He shall rule over all his enemies,” as we have observed upon that passage. And therefore it cannot be rendered in this place in the first person, “ I will act confidently.”

Let us therefore give to this middle verse its two members ; for the *first* member is this, “ I will set him in safety ;” and the *second* part is, “ He speaks to him.” The sense of the former member, therefore, is this : For this purpose I will arise that I may put or raise up or establish salvation ; that is, make it firm and stable, and so strong that not even the gates of hell shall prevail against it. I will prepare salvation, and will so save that no one shall be able to condemn, desolate, or destroy my saints any farther. For the expression in the Hebrew

is alone and absolute, "I will put;" that is, I will firmly establish, I will set it upon a firm foundation, I will be founder and establisher of it. Then there is, "in safety;" that is, this foundation shall not be of riches or of the things of this world; but it shall be a foundation of salvation: so that they who are placed and set therein, shall be saved for ever, and no one shall pluck them out of my hand. Which truth is like unto that of Isaiah xxviii. "Behold I will lay in the foundations of Zion a chief corner-stone: he that believeth shall not make haste:" excepting, that the expression in the verse before us is more brief and obscure. And there is no doubt that David is here speaking of Christ who is the firm foundation of salvation; an invincible rock unto all that trust in him, and whose name also is derived from salvation; as it is said here, ASCHITH BEISA. 'I will put him in Jesu.' And we are here to understand, that the impious are put in contrast with these saints; for the wicked are not "put" but are driven about like the wind: nor are they put in safety, but in perdition and ruin, like a house built upon the sand. For this last part of the verse is the Word of promise, which consoles the poor and terrifies the wicked, as I said.

The second member will have that sense which the other part of the word of Isaiah has, "He that believeth shall not be confounded." So here "he speaks to him;" that is, he despises them, and with confidence speaks the Word of faith and of the cross. As it is introduced by Psalm cxvi. and by the Apostle 2 Cor. iv. 13, "According as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; so we also believe, and therefore we speak." For those who have their foundation in saving faith and on the rock Christ, are animated to preach the Word of God with all confidence to every one that is willing to believe; fearing nothing, not even the greatest number, and the most powerful sects of hypocrites that may rise up against them: as we have it recorded by Luke, Acts iv. and as it was fulfilled in the Apostles. But they that are destitute of this faith have not the courage so much as to open their mouth.

Therefore, we ought to receive this very short yet very obscure part of the verse before us as a whisper of the Spirit, which was whispered into the ears of David : and that while he was sighing for the devastation of the people of God, and of faith, he received this short oracle in answer : You are asking what remedy God intends for this evil. It is this, " I will set him in safety : he speaks to him." That is, know thou that I have ordained against this devastation of the saints, a foundation which I will place, even Christ : on whom I will build, and in whom I will save my church, against whom they shall not in the least prevail, nor shall they destroy one that believeth in him. Nor am I content with this. For when they shall have been thus saved, they shall come forth into public, and shall speak my Word with all boldness ; by which they shall not only defend themselves, but shall also destroy their destroyers, and shall convert many who have turned away.

And thus, all things may be easily made to harmonize. " I will act confidently in him : " that is, I will cause them to act with all boldness in my Word of faith. And therefore, Luke in the Acts of the Apostles seems to have made particular use of this verse, and that studiously ; saying, Acts ix. That Paul preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And again, Acts xiv. " And they abode there for a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord." And again, Acts xviii. Luke says of Apollos, " And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue." And it is quite usual with Luke to speak of preaching the Word boldly ; so that it is manifest, that he took the whole of those expressions from this verse, as from a continually used proverb.

Leaning, therefore, on this authority, I am inclined to believe that the Hebrew word *JAPIA* (which, Psalm x. we have explained as signifying ' to bring forward,' ' to appear,' ' to rule over,' ' to despise ;' and which Hieronymus has rendered in this place ' help,' to ' meditate with one's self,' and ' to speak,') signifies most properly ' to act with confidence or boldness,' which is the rendering our translator has given it : and Luke has no other

meaning in his 'acting with boldness,' than that the Word was preached will all boldness : and this, according to Psalm cxvi. is 'to believe, and therefore to speak.' And this is the same, (though somewhat more obscurely and briefly,) as 'to despise,' 'to rule over,' 'to appear,' 'to meditate,' 'to speak,' and 'to have help.' For, by what other power do we despise, rule over, appear, speak, and have help, than by the Word of faith preached with all confidence. For, the wicked rules over his enemies and speaks his word against them with all confidence ; so the godly man rules over his enemies, and speaks the Word of God against them with all confidence.

By which things, we are again taught that the power of the church is none other than the Word of God, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, Rom. i. And the rod of the strength of God, Psalm cx. Thus Hosea, i. 7, "But I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen." Wherefore, in a word, the sense of this verse is, that the godly have a two-fold help ; that is, faith and the Word : faith, by which they are saved themselves ; and the Word, whereby they destroy the ungodly, and multiply the "saints" and the "truths" among the men whom the ungodly desolate. Faith is touched upon, where David says, "I will set him in safety," or 'in saving : ' and the Word, where he says, "I will act condently in him : " or 'he speaks to him,' (as the Hebrew has it.)

And to whom does he 'speak?' and who is it that 'speaks?' No person is here mentioned : and therefore the sentence is absolute and general. As if he had said, I will set him in safety, or, I will strengthen him in faith. And behold, this is wrought in him who speaks. For as soon as any one believes, he immediately speaks. In Acts ii. we have it recorded, that as soon as they were filled with the Spirit they began to speak. Nor does the Psalmist mention the person who is spoken to ; this omission is on account of the same generality of expression. "He speaks to him," or 'against him : ' that is,

against the wicked, or the ungodly destroyers. And thus when faith comes there is one who speaks and one who hears: and then follows also the gift of faith, both speaking and hearing: by which two things both mercy and truth are multiplied.

And observe this also,—that this ‘setting in safety,’ is the work of God alone. But ‘speaking to the wicked,’ is our co-operation. And therefore, God ascribes the former to himself and the latter to man: which latter nevertheless our translation ascribes unto God, when it says in the first person, “I will act confidently in him.” Behold, therefore, how obscure, how brief, and how full this Word is which is contained in the latter part of this verse. It would however be better to insert a conjunction, in this manner, ‘I will set him in safety, and he speaks to him;’ to avoid the harshness of the Hebraism.

But let no one pass over the order here observed. That ‘being put in safety’ goes before ‘speaking to him,’ or ‘acting boldly:’ because we must first believe, and burn, before we can teach and shine, if we would teach with profit and with boldness. For the Word of salvation cannot be taught without faith. In the time of persecution, “I believed, (saith the Psalmist,) and therefore have I spoken.

Ver. 6. *The speaking of God is pure: silver proved by the fire, proved of the earth, purified seven times.*

These things are to be understood as spoken in an antithesis or contrast; wherein he draws a comparison between the words of men and the words of God. He sets forth the words of men as being vain, flattering, and varying; by which they are not purified, but more and more polluted in spirit, and by which men are deprived of mercy and truth. But the words of God are represented as chaste, pure, or clean, and rough yet upright, faithful and solid, by which men are cleansed, and by which also mercy and truth are multiplied, and vanity, craft, and discord are destroyed.

This verse explains the allegory of silver, which David here uses to set forth the words of God, which he calls



silver tried, proved, and purified seven times: whereas, in the eyes of the godly they are the dregs, the off-scouring, and the filth of the world, by which they think they are polluted and dishonoured. On the other hand, David declares that the words of the wicked are vain, flattering, and variable, whereby they destroy mercy and truth: whereas, they think them to be quite the contrary. And David has given both these descriptions in the spirit.

By the words (*eloquia*) of the Lord, David does not mean those things only which are written in the scriptures, but much more especially those things which are spoken forth by the voice. Even as he had said of the words of the wicked, "They speak vain things; every one hath a flattering lip to his neighbour; they speak with a divided heart." So, it is not the scripture of God, but the words spoken (*eloquia*) of God more particularly, which he calls pure. For the scripture does not so much hurt or profit, as the word spoken (*eloquium*;) for the voice is the soul of the word. Nor is it necessary to understand by the *eloquia Domini*, those things only which are written on the scriptures, and then spoken by the voice; but we understand by them all those things which God speaks by man, even without the scriptures, whether he be a fool, or one who is learned: as he often spoke by the apostles, and still does speak by *his*. Wherefore, these *eloquia Domini*, or words of the Lord, are when God speaks in us, and not when any thing of the scriptures is brought forward; for this, even devils and the wicked may do; in whom, nevertheless, God never speaks: nor are such the *eloquia* or words of God, but a certain froth of the words of God, like the scum of silver.

Wherefore, the remedy of our salvation against the destroyers of the needy and the desolators of the saints in the earth, is the Word of God awakened up against the word of men: which Word, as it is most pure, (as silver purged from its dross proved, and purified seven times,) purifies, makes solid, and proves the heart of man, making the heart like unto itself, that it may not

savour of any thing that is its own, and upon the earth, but the things which are God's and in the heavens.

But the word of men is the mere scum and froth of this silver : it imitates silver under a certain outside form and appearance, but it is vain ; and not only so, but is vanity itself ; for it is the mere scum and dregs from which the silver is purified. That is, the wicked pretend that they teach the words (*eloquia*) of God : whereas, they omit its pure, true, and genuine sense, and teach a certain froth, scum, and dregs of it : which, as it is impurity itself, so it can cleanse nothing, nor does it leave any thing proved by faith : as it is written Isaiah i. 22, "Thy silver is become dross ; thy wine is mixed with water."

For example sake.—If you should so teach, 'Thou shalt not kill,' 'Thou shalt not steal,' and the like *eloquia* of God ; as to say, that a man would not kill or commit adultery unless he should kill by the very act, or should not commit adultery unless he fell into the very act ; you would thereby teach an impure, vain, and vague scum, instead of the real, sure, and tried silver of the Word : for such an one may commit adultery and murder in the will and in spirit, and may not grieve at them when committed by others, but may let them pass by unrebuked, and may even laugh at them, or perhaps, sing of them. Such is the manner, (*mos*) or rather, such is the death (*mors*) of men, whereby they are all men of blood.

On the other hand, if you teach, that he who prays, or fasts, or does any good word, (according to the substance of the act ; as we are wont to speak,) is a true worshipper of God, or a true keeper of the sabbath,—here again with a deceitful lip you teach scum and dross, for silver ; because, the person may either do all these things with an unwilling heart, or with a view to his own advantage : that is, he may do them without the spirit : and thus, he has not truly done them, but is found to be a deceitful man. Hence, this is also the manner (*mos*) or rather the death (*mors*) of men ; whereby they are rendered deceitful men ; for they not only

do not reprove these things, but boast of them as virtues, sing of them, and glory in them. And by these things the saint has now ceased, and truth is perished in men. For the law is spiritual: and it is not taught by these vain and deceitful lips, but is rather extinguished. And we say the same of all the other *eloquia* or words of God throughout the whole scripture.

And it is with a particular design that David made this verse to follow the other that precedes, where he had said, "And he speaks to him:" for he thereby would shew, who it is that speaks, and what it is that is spoken:—namely, that it is God speaking, and speaking his pure words (*eloquia*.)—And, that we may come to grammatical niceties, it is not "pure" that we find in the Hebrew, but "clean;" though "pure" is often metaphorically used for "clean." Nor is the Psalmist to be considered as speaking of mere grammatical cleanness; though even this is not wanting to the divine words (*eloquia*;) no, nor of sensual or mortal cleanness; for this may be applied to things impure and shameful. But this cleanness is to be received as signifying that theological and effectual cleanness which alone makes the man like unto itself, and purifies him from all his own impure affections: with which impure affections, none more foully pollute a man than those human and deceitful teachers, who teach their own righteousness, and increase all unclean affections, and moreover, inflame men and cause them to be puffed up with, and glory in their own filth, and never to be cleansed from it. For the heart, no man is ever cleansed in any other way than by the Word received by faith. According to Acts xv. "purifying your hearts by faith." And Psalm xix. "The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul." And again, Psalm li. "Sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be clean."

"Tried with fire." Our translator has added "fire:" in the Hebrew it is only sublimated silver, or melted or proved silver: but because this is done by fire, our translator has added fire for the sake of giving it clearness.

This "proved of the earth," all consider to be a

Greek expression, who say ‘proved or clear of earth, or from earth,’ as we say ‘clear of blood.’ And Hieronymus translates it ‘separate from earth.’

And this “earth,” they understand figuratively, in many different ways. But here I am quite blind. It is certain that “earth” (*terræ*) is in the Hebrew, in the dative case: which might be translated ‘to earth,’ (*ad terram*) rather than ‘from earth,’ (*a terrâ.*) And Reuchlin says, that *ÆLIL*, which our translators render “proved” or “tried,” is the name of a vessel in which metals are melted. And to this there is added the preposition *in*: as if one should render the passage thus, ‘Silver melted in a vessel of earth;’ or, ‘to earth;’ which has reference both to the earth itself, and to the use of the earth: that is, that use which those may make of the earth who live in the earth; that is, men.—If therefore we receive these things as true, we may here suppose that the prophet borrowed an allegory from the custom and practice of silver refiners (which is in frequent use with all the prophets) and applied it mystically to the words of God. For silver is of no use whatever in the earth, unless it be melted and proved, that you may separate the silver from the lamina, or strata or vein. And it cannot be melted in this way but by fire, nor by fire without a vessel.

But now let us open up the *allegory* herein contained. The words of God in the bare letter, and in the understanding of the flesh, when either written or spoken without the experience of the cross, is silver in the vein only. As Job has the allusion, chap. xxviii. 1, where he saith, “Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they find it.” And David also prefigured the same, when he prepared all the materials and expenses for Solomon to build the temple. But this treasure while hidden is of no utility to earthly man. As Ecclesiasticus xx. 30 saith, “Wisdom that is hid and treasure that is hoarded up, what profit is in them both?” that is, until they be brought forth and proved by the oppositions and fightings against them by the wicked, by heretics, and by devils.

And believers are this earthen vessel for melting, in which this treasure is carried and proved: for it produces a powerful contest in the person that carries it, that he might conquer, and might know that wisdom is stronger than all things, Wisdom xvi. And thus the Word of God being proved by the fire and found faithful, profits many men by the preaching of those who are proved. And upon this the Apostle touches, 1 Cor. xi. 19, where he says, "For there must also be heresies among you, (that is fires and melters,) that they which are approved (that is, vessels in which the silver of the words of God is exercised,) may be made manifest," being become the salt of the earth and the light of the world: that is, they shine unto those men of the earth who are called to the glory of God; and thus helped and enriched by the use of the same silver. This is certainly the meaning of the Hebrew, where it says 'of the earth,' or, 'to the matter of the earth.'

And because the ungodly hate this melting or proving of the words of God in themselves, and do not endure the offence of the cross, they seek to please men, having become vain talkers, deceitful, deceivers, and unstable. As the Apostle disputes in his Epistle to the Galatians, and as this Psalm saith. The words (*eloquia*) of God therefore, are neither understood nor profitable, but in those who are mortified and exercised in tribulation: that is, unless we be powerfully opposed, and tried, and tempted for the Word's sake: for it is not so much we that suffer, as the Word in us.

And to this sense and meaning our translation may be brought, omitting all other glosses. In this way, "proved of the earth;" that is, found by the men on the earth to be faithful, delightful, and well pleasing; that is, unto those who have known its faithfulness, its power, and its purity by experience, and who trust in it, (having lost all their filthy confidence in all other things which those ungodly teachers hold forth,) and are purified by the all-pure faith of the all-pure Word. And thus earth (*terræ*) remains most properly in the dative case, as it is both in the Greek and in the Hebrew.

“Purified seven times.” Here some understand the expression very deeply, as referring to the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit; and more deeply than my humble thoughts and understanding of the literal meaning will bear. I should understand seven-fold as signifying simply ‘most perfectly:’ for *seven* is the number of universality. Nor am I fully assured, that such an accented of this *number* would fully touch upon this purification of the silver, which is not purified to the full and to perfection in the melting vessel, but in the ashes of bones, by the application of lead. And how does the wisdom of God work thus wonderfully throughout the world that the lead should be the means of purifying the silver? Why thus,—the words of hypocrites, as they are the lead of the silver, so they are very much like the divine words: but yet, in the fire of persecution, they so exercise themselves and are exercised also, that as lead vanishes and disappears while the silver is purified; so, in the end of the world, true wisdom shall shine forth in all its splendour, and the foolishness of the wicked shall become nought, (as the Apostle saith in his Epistle to Timothy.) Thus does the all-specious doctrine of the ungodly work for the glory of the true doctrine, and to its own shame and ignominy, while it resists true godliness. And therefore, it would not be at all improper to apply the former purifying of the earthen vessel to tyrannical persecutors, and the latter of lead to heretics and false brethren; who, as lead is mixed with the silver in the same ashes and vessel, are mingled with us within the same church, and are exercised in the footsteps of the fathers that are dead, and of the martyrs; but, without the church, they act like tyrants, and like the bellows do that blow up the fire under the refining pot.

Hence we see how the prophet takes all away from works and gives it to faith, while he asserts, that the words of God are clean. And he at the same time most sharply reproveth those who seek and desire to be cleansed by works. For of what avail is it to do many works, if after all you are not cleansed? There is no

cleansing but by the words of God. And no one is cleansed by the words of God but he that believes. And no one believes but he that suffers passively more than he works actively. By which things it comes to pass, that a life pure and without sin, does not stand in works, but in faith, in the Word, and in enduring sufferings. But why does David compare the words of God to silver rather than to gold? Love is what is properly compared to gold in the scriptures; the nature of which, in the fire, is different to that of silver: of which we shall speak hereafter.

Ver. 7.—*Thou, O Lord, shalt preserve us: thou shalt guard us from this generation for ever.*

The translator might have said more properly in the optative 'Do thou keep,' and 'do thou preserve:' for this is properly a prayer of the prophet against the generation of justiciaries. And though 'to preserve' and 'to guard' do not differ much, yet the Hebrew has "preserve" in the latter, and "guard" in the former clause: as Hieronymus also has it. For David prays to be preserved from this generation, after the manner of a prohibition, thus,—that we may be prevented from associating with them or consenting unto them. And he prays God that his words (*eloquia*) may be guarded, after the manner of protection, that the ungodly might not pollute them. And instead of "thou shalt preserve us," it is in the Hebrew "thou shalt preserve *them*;" and it refers to the words of God, as Hieronymus translates it. But it may also be referred to the saints, as it is in the masculine gender *servabis eos*. Nor should I reject the acceptation, if any one should understand it as referring to the ungodly: that God would preserve and guard them, that is, that they might not any more speak vain things, nor destroy the saints from the sons of men.

And here we see, that it is not our power that can cause the words of God to remain pure, or that can prevent the saints from failing from among men, but the power of God only. "Thou, O Lord, shalt preserve," not We, men, will preserve. Thus Christ saith, 'The

harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.' And he has commanded us to pray the same in the Lord's prayer, where he has taught us to pray for "our daily bread:" that is, the words (*eloquia*) of God. But we, laying aside prayer, and trusting to literature, to our abilities, and to our studies, act in security, until we ourselves become those speakers of vain things, and that impious and ungodly generation from which David here prays to be guarded.

Hence we collect, that though this Psalm may most properly be applied to the time of Christ, as all such scriptures may; yet, as this generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be fulfilled, they apply to all times and ages. And truly in our age the Turks, the Jews, and ceremonialists, most greatly increase this generation, and have supplanted almost all faith and all the Word of faith. And against these there is nothing that we can do but pray unto the Lord of the harvest, that he would arise, put us in salvation, and speak to them.

Ver. 8.—*The wicked walk round about: according to thy highness thou hast multiplied the sons of men.*

The verb "hast multiplied" is not in the Hebrew. Hieronymus renders the passage thus,—'The wicked walk round about; the most vile of the sons of men are exalted.' I believe this verse has never been brought forth out of darkness by any one: nor that on which we have just spoken, "Proved of the earth." I confess my ignorance with respect to both these passages, and I think all those that have written before me must do the same.

For the one part of it, our translator has given us, "according to thy highness;" but the pronoun *thy* is superfluous. Hieronymus has it 'when they are exalted.' It is manifest, therefore, that the Hebrew is a word that signifies 'highness.' I think it is the primitive and active verb רומ, that is, 'has exalted,' or 'has lifted up.' And therefore, according to my judgment, it



should be rendered thus, 'As he has exalted the vilest out of the sons of men.' For where we have "hast multiplied," the Hebrew has ZYLLOTH in the feminine gender, which signifies vile, abject, light men; such as gluttons and frequenters of brothels: for, by the Hebrews, those who are devoted to feasting and luxury are called ZOLELIM in the masculine gender.

So that the sense will be, This generation has surrounded the ungodly teachers, and walk together with them; even as it has exalted and wished to have those who are the vilest of the sons of men, or among the sons of men: that is, this generation gather about them ungodly disciples, and exalt the most vile to be teachers: so that they are, like teachers like disciples: the blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch. And if this verse was ever fulfilled at any time, is it not most truly fulfilled at this day? For, who in our day is put at the helm of ecclesiastical matters but the very dregs of the world? That is, such as the world can neither use nor derive any benefit from? And this is what our ingratitude has justly merited.

And here again we see, that to these ungodly teachers is ascribed the care of the belly, as we have it, Psalm v. "Their throat is an open sepulchre." And the Apostle saith, "Whose god is their belly," and calls them by that most odious name "gluttons," who look after nothing but eating.

Nor is it in vain that in the Hebrew word ZYLLOTH there is one letter *Lamed* wanting, and the letter *Vaf* in the verb CRYM: as if to shew, that each was only a thing in appearance and not in reality; because they are not truly exalted, and they would have themselves considered to be any thing but gluttons. But these things we will leave to the curious and those who wish to spend time upon them.

Our translation may be harmonized with this sense thus,—The wicked walk round about, that is, there are many surrounding and surrounded, both ungodly disciples and ungodly teachers; and they walk and persevere in their ways. 'For thou hast multiplied the

sons of men according to thy highness : that is, thou hast exalted to places of power, not the sons of God, but the sons of men ; and of those, not the few and the good, but the many and those who are the most vile among them.

Some of the fathers refer sons of men to the children of God. And some will have that this "highness" signifies secret counsel ; and others the grace and mercy of God bestowed without the merit of men. Which acceptation I do not condemn, but it is not the literal meaning.

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## P S A L M XIII.

TO VICTORY : A PSALM OF DAVID.

Ver. 1.—*How far wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How far wilt thou hide thy face from me?*

Ver. 2.—*How far shall I take counsel in my soul, and sorrow in my heart all the day? How far shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*

THIS simple manner of the Hebrew expression is the best way of rendering the passage, and it shews the feelings of David more plainly, where he repeats the same word four times "How far?" But instead of this, some translators being fond of variety, put in the third place 'How long?' And that, to no small injury of the effect.

The general meaning of the Psalm seems to be the person of one of those speaking who is suffering the same things as David ; that is, death and hell : which are the same feelings as those described, Psalm vi. : for here David challenges death, and fights against desperation, proclaiming the mercy of God. And that which shews the peculiar power of the opening of the

Psalm is the four urgent and agonizing questions which David utters forth. For as in every tribulation delay of help is heavy to be borne, so it is most especially so in this spiritual conflict. And therefore, he says, Psalm vi. "I have grown old among all mine enemies." And Psalm xxxii. 3, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." So here, he four times expostulates concerning the delay of the divine help, and complains that he is left for ever, nay, consigned to oblivion; that is, in despair, and never to be received of God again; for thus it appears, under this pressure of eternal death, to those who are thus put into tribulation.

There is an emphasis, therefore, in every word, whereby he expresses himself as experiencing an angry God; (as far as he feels it so to be in the feelings and apprehensions of his spirit.) Thou not only leavest me (says David) in order to prove and know me, but thou forgettest me as if dead and out of mind, and as blotted out of the book of life and of thy memory; I am utterly reprobated, and thou never wilt again behold me, neither at the present time, nor for ever to all eternity; so that I have no hope left, but that I shall be destroyed with the damned to all eternity. And though I thus cry with a loud voice and call upon thee, behold, thou not only dost not hear me, but even turnest away thy face that thou mightest not hear me, and hast become altogether inexorable.

Does not David here then, in the most plain words, describe a most afflicting and bitter state and feeling of mind, when he expresses himself as feeling that God is wholly turned away from him, become his adversary, implacable, inexorable, and eternally wroth with him? For in this state, hope despairs, and despair hopes; and there is nothing remaining alive but that inward groan that cannot be uttered, in which the spirit cries, moving upon the face of these waters covered with darkness, as it is said, Gen. i. 2.—No one can understand these things but he who has tasted them; they do not stand in speculations and fancies; nor are they such things as

speculative ones can sport and play with at their ease : but they lie in the inmost feelings of the immortal life ; that is, in the feelings of the soul. It is the immortal part that suffers and is afflicted, and they are immortal things that cause the oppression and affliction ;—namely, sins : the end of these things also to which they have reference is immortal ; namely, an angry and reproofing God : and those who urge the oppression and affliction upon us are immortal ;—namely, devils, who accuse us before God ; as it is written, Rev. xii.

And therefore, from all the causes, (the material, the final, the efficient, and the formal, as we are accustomed to speak,) this tribulation is eternal and inevitable. The soul can much more easily endure afflictions in that part where it is temporal and mortal ; that is, in the flesh and the natural senses : but in that part, where it is immortal, it is inconsolable under its agonies.— I call the soul mortal and immortal, in order to express the nature of these things : therefore let no one entangle me in my words. For the soul dies to this life, but is alive immortally to that life which is to come. And therefore, it can more easily endure those sufferings which come from men, from the world, and from the flesh, than those which come from devils who oppress those with the accusations of their sins, who are under the temptations of death and hell. It can more easily endure under sufferings of the natural senses, than under terrors and confusions of the conscience. It can more easily endure under those sufferings which are endured as a supposed satisfaction for sin, and to bring about a hoped-for reconciliation with God, than under those which proceed from a sense of the eternal and immovable fore-knowledge of a reprobating God.

Wherefore, let no one imagine that the words of David are expressive of a trifling and common tribulation, when he says, ‘ thou forgettest me ;’ ‘ thou turnest away from me for ever ;’ ‘ thou dost not hear me ;’ ‘ thou dost not design to hear me ;’ ‘ thou blottest me out of thy memory, and will never look upon me again :’ and as Job says, chap. ix. 16, “ If I had called,

and he had answered me ; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice." As if he had said, He appears to me to be so inexorable, that even if any one should so presume to think that he heard me, I would not believe it ; nay, I could not hope that even the sound of my voice had reached his ear.

He, therefore, that has these feelings concerning God, being left to himself, does that which followeth : namely, he boils and fluctuates with various counsels, trying all ways to get delivered ; forming many plans to himself, and yet always remaining destitute of counsel. As Hezekiah saith, Isaiah xxxviii. " What shall I say, or what will he answer me, when he himself hath done it ? " For being pressed in the midst of these straits, he knows not which way to turn himself. If he would flee unto God, he hears this sentence, ' Thou turnest away thy face from me.' And this, " what will he answer me, when he himself hath done it ? " If he would flee unto any other, there is no other that can deliver him, because all things, and God also, stand against him : and thus, these things pressing him on all sides, force him to take evil counsel, and yet, they will not suffer him to find any counsel. And this is what David here says, " How far shall I take counsels in my heart ? " For the word counsels here, is the same as that which we have, Psalm i. " The counsel of the wicked : " that is, the imaginations of the heart, whereby a man hopes to conduct and rule himself.

But what these counsels of this afflicted heart are, no one can know, but he that suffers and experiences them. Job, however, gives us a signal example of them, chap. ix. throughout the whole chapter, where he recounts the great and wonderful works of God ; shewing how the soul, when brought into this situation, thinks of various things. At one time it rises up and considers what God has done to the wicked, in order to console itself. Again, when it hopes to consider the past good things that it has enjoyed, it soon falls, saying, ver. 20, " If I justify myself, he shall prove me perverse." Nay, he asserts, that even if any one were in-

nocent before him, he could consume him (such are his feelings.) Hence, saith he, ver. 22, "He destroyeth both the righteous and the wicked." As if he had said, It matters not here, whether you be just or unjust, he can cast down both. Nor can the man here find any distinction that he can make between the righteous and the wicked: for he sees that all things are according to the gifts of God. But however, we have neither time nor place here, to speak upon this chapter so fully as it deserves. Christ endured this same tribulation of the cross, when he said that he had not where to lay his head. And again, "All refuge failed me, and no man cared for my soul." For here nothing but fleeing, dread, terror, and confusion reign.

"Sorrow in my heart all the day:" that is, misery, affliction, and a casting down, (for that is the meaning of the Hebrew,) all the day. For he is in alarm every moment, fearing to be cast down to all eternity. The strait of mind itself produces sorrow, and a sorrow from which the man under the tribulation cannot escape. Hence Paul expresses all these things in these words, Rom. ii. 8, "But to them that are contentious, &c. indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek."

"Shall I take (or put) counsels in my heart?" The Hebrew expression is the same as this, "I have put my words in thy mouth;" and, "Put this into thine heart;" "I have put my soul in my hand." Which should express in Latin thus, *capiam consilia*, 'I will take counsel.' And then we have "in my soul" or 'heart' (that is, with or in myself.) Because (he would say) there is no one from whom I can receive counsel, for there is no man that knows this my sighing, nor any one that can consult for me. As therefore, the man in this state suffers alone, so he takes various and anxious counsels alone: there is no possibility here of communicating counsels, even as you could not communicate the sorrow and burden of the heart; and it is this very circumstance that renders the burden the more agonizing.

For in all other common tribulations, you may find some one who has suffered the same things, and who can give counsel and consolation.

“How far shall mine enemy triumph over me?” David first attributed all this to God’s forgetting him, turning away from him, and not hearing him. Now he attributes it to his enemy. And here the victory now begins to incline in favour of the man tried, and an end of the temptation is drawing near. For it is one part of the victory to feel out the enemy in this temptation, and to feel yourself to be getting the mastery over him. For although by the permission of God the enemy is exalted; yet in the midst of the temptation this enemy does not appear, but God seems to be doing all this. And this is what the enemy aims at, that the man tried should not attribute the whole to him but to God. As was exemplified in Christ crucified, whom they so assaulted with blasphemies, that he seemed to himself to be hated of God: as we have it Psalm iii. 2, “Many there be that say of my soul, there is no help for him in his God.” He does not here mention any particular enemy, but speaks in a general way: though he means the devil, and his pursuits, and designs, for it is he that properly reigns in this temptation. Hence, it is the opinion of many, that Christ often endured this temptation, especially in the garden. And John xii. 27, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” These are wonderful words, and certainly full of straits of soul. Behold, here, how Christ proposes counsels to himself in his troubled soul. First, “What shall I say?” Then he prays, “save me.” Then he refuses this, “But for this cause came I unto this hour.” At last he says, “Father, glorify thy name.” Here the conflict is at length ended; which conflict no one ought to wonder that it was brought upon him by the devil. For Luke writes, chap. iv. that, when the devil had tempted him in the desert, he left him for a season. From which some conclude, and not improperly, that he was often tried. For those are not to

be heard who would have it that Christ was a mere unfeeling trunk of a tree; for we are to believe, that he was subject to all kinds of temptations as pure and real man: as he himself saith to his disciples: "But ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations."

When, therefore, we know that it is the enemy who worketh these things, the ray of divine mercy begins to glimmer, and to comfort the soul; so that it accuses its enemy and hopes well concerning God, which it could not do in the midst of the storm. And hence, this is the last part of his complaint, that the enemy triumphed over him.

*Ver. 3.—Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.*

I shall abide by the Hebrew arrangement and punctuation of this verse, which are obscure in our translations.

Behold what a different feeling here is from that above, where he complained that he prayed in vain, that God had forgotten him, and had turned away and did not hear him: but now by persevering he begins to have a confidence that his prayer will be heard. As Christ has taught us, Luke xi. concerning perseverance in prayer, by the circumstances of one friend continuing to ask, while the other continues to refuse. So, God seems sometimes to deny for a time: but if the soul did not feel a confidence that it should be heard, it would not pray. Wherefore, David just now emerging and beginning to be conqueror, prays for an end of the temptation, and that God would consider him, and have respect unto him: though he was all the time truly and really considered and heard. For we do not pray to be considered, previous to God's considering us; but what we want is, to be enabled to feel that God does consider us, by enjoying the peace and confidence of it in our hearts. It is God's first considering us and having respect unto us by his grace, that causes us to pray that he would have respect unto us and hear us. And this prayer is thus given, that the man might not only be possessed of



the grace of a mercy-shewing God, but that he might know that mercy, and enjoy the peace of it.

David here has each for each. He had before complained of four evils, and now he prays for four good things.

“Consider me,” refers to that complaint, “How far wilt thou forget me?” As if he had said, ‘Thou not only didst not see me, but wast not even mindful of me. But now, not only remember me, but draw near unto me, and look upon and consider me; that the good may now be so much the greater as the evil was the greater before. And, “consider” or “have respect” is a figurative expression of the scriptures, which signifies the feelings of a mercy-shewing God. Even as by the word “arise,” as we have shewn in the preceding Psalm, is signified a putting forth of the power of God. But ‘considering,’ signifies a nearer feeling than remembering:’ even as the feeling is more severe ‘not to remember,’ than ‘not to consider.’ And David here sets forth a beautiful contrast between the evil to be borne and the good to be received.

“Hear me, O Lord my God,” refers to that “me,” “How far wilt thou turn away thy face from me?” As if he had said, ‘Thou wast turned away from me, and wast inexorable, like a strict and severe judge, as if thou hadst designed to do nothing else but condemn me. Thou not only didst not hear me, but turnedst away thy face that thou mayest not hear me. But now, being become the Lord my God, not only do thou turn and hear me, but answer me, and do nothing but save me, that thus, instead of an angry judge, I may have a most merciful God.

“Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death,” refers to that complaint, “How long shall I take counsel in my soul and be sorrowed in my heart all day?” For when the face of God is turned from us, there immediately follow perturbation, confusion, darkness of mind, and ignorance of counsel; under which, we grope about as in the dark, and seek on every side a way and means of escape. But when he lifts up the light of his countenance upon us, and turns his face towards us to hear

us, our eyes are immediately illuminated, and all things are full of the most salutary counsels. For he that walketh in the day-time stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: so we, when we come near unto him, are illuminated, and our faces are not confounded.

And that which follows refers to the complaint, "How far shall mine enemy triumph over me?" namely, these words, "Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him." Here however he says, "Lest I sleep the sleep of death," or "that I sleep not in death:" wherein, he expresses the danger. For "I sleep" is the same expression here as "I rest" in Psalm iv. and it is in that place rendered by Hieronymus "I sleep." "I shall rest together in peace and sleep;" that is, 'I shall lay dead in peace with my fathers.' Thus, as David is speaking in the Spirit, and as the scripture has this common usage, he makes use of the verb 'to sleep,' not as signifying corporal sleep but death.

And, as I said, in this verse he touches upon the power and force of this temptation, which is an all-presently felt temptation of death and hell pressing upon the man with intolerable bitterness, as Hezekiah saith, Isaiah xxxviii. and it seems as if the gates of hell were just about to swallow him up, and thrust him down into the eternal pit: as David saith in another place, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." Wherefore he here also prays, 'that he might not sleep in death:' that is, that he might not die, and might not lie dead in eternal death. This same thing he expresses more at large, Psalm vi. thus, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Contrary to which is that expression, Psalm iv. "I shall rest in peace together, and sleep." For while the light of the Lord's countenance is lifted up upon him, the man is joyful, and dies in peace. But when God turns his face away and leaves the man to fluctuate in his own counsels in his soul, he is filled with sorrow, fearing lest he should die in death: that is, lest he should be hurled and driven headlong as by a whirlwind into the all-terrible and eternal confusion.

Wherefore, this verse is the light of the whole Psalm; plainly shewing that this temptation is in the most high matters of faith, hope, and love: where distrust, despair, hatred, blasphemy, and the like terrible things of hell and of the damned, contend in the most bitter conflict with this faith, hope, and love. For lust, anger, pride, and covetousness will have nothing to do with purity, mildness, humility, and bounty: nay, the rage of all corporal persecution, fire, famine, sword, and ignominy, must be combined together against these supposed evils. Hence, we are here to understand, that David feared death most especially on this account, because, there was not only no praise of God in it, but hatred and blasphemy; and these it was that he so much abhorred and shuddered at.

Ver. 5.—*Lest mine enemy should say, I have prevailed against him. Those that trouble me will rejoice if I be moved.*

As this is one verse in the Hebrew, the sense will be clearer if we put a conjunction in the middle, for the sake of elucidating the repetition: in this manner, ‘Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him, and mine enemies should rejoice because I am moved.’ For the expression, I have prevailed over him, or have prevailed against him, is thus rendered, Psalm cxxix. 2, “But they have not prevailed against me.” And we also call this prevailing against any one. For the enemies boasting that they have prevailed, and the persecutors exulting that the saint is conquered, is the same thing; which would be the case if he should sleep in death. And it is the same thing that is said against these characters, Psalm vi. 8, “Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity: (that is AVEN, or pain,) for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.” And again, ‘Lest mine enemies should rejoice over me: for when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.’ For here he expresses the same thing, and almost in the same words; as is quite manifest.

This is the exulting and boasting of devils; such ex-

ultations and boastings as they poured forth out of the mouths of the Jews on Christ crucified: "If thou be the Son of God come down now from the cross," "Save thyself," "Let him deliver him now, if he will have him." Here it is that the enemy exults: as David had complained in the 4th verse. And therefore, he prays that this may not be the case, or that it might not be the case for ever. For, if this is most hard to be borne when wrought by men in their trifling victories over us with respect to temporal things; how much more and unspeakably terrible must be the confusion that is caused by devils in their victories over us in eternal things? 'For this is the extreme of all evils, as it is said, Wo unto the conquered, when to their evils and afflictions there are added ignominy, insult, and boasting: for this galls more terribly than the very fight, nay worse than the slaughter and the fall.' If this be the case, therefore, we may know what the state of the case is with the conquered when in confusion about eternal things.

But it may be asked, how can devils exult, who, as we believe, bear about their damnation with them every where? This I leave to be explained by others: there are numbers of examples, that they have exulted at the fall of the saints: but even if there were no such examples, yet the authority of this scripture would be sufficient to establish the truth of the thing in the minds of the believing.

Ver. 5.—*But I have hoped in thy mercy; my heart hath rejoiced in thy salvation.*

Ver. 6.—*I will sing unto the Lord, who hath rewarded me good things; and I will sing praises unto the name of the Lord Most High.*

All this is one verse in the Hebrew; and the last clause, "I will sing praises unto the name of the Lord Most High," is added from Psalm vii. 17. For the Hebrew concludes the verse thus, "Who has rewarded me good:" or to render it word for word, 'For he hath returned upon me.' Hence, the first part of the verse has three members or clauses, "I have hoped in thy

mercy;" "My heart hath rejoiced in thy salvation," and "I will sing unto the Lord:" concerning which feelings we have spoken abundantly, Psalm v.

David seems to put these things as a contrast to, and in opposition to, the boasting of his enemies. As if he had said, They exult and boast that they have prevailed, and that I have yielded as being vanquished.— But I do not boast of my strength, but of thy mercy: and I exult, not in my victory, but in thy salvation, (or, thy saving,) whereby thou hast saved me, an unworthy creature, who deserved any thing but such a favour; and this thou hast done through thy mercy.—And there is a powerful emphasis in the expressions "thy mercy" and "thy salvation."

Hereby, is inculcated, that which is repeatedly enforced on account of hypocrites, and those that know not God: namely, that there is no one who is not found a damnable sinner before God; that there is no one who can stand before the face and sting of these devils, how holy and full of good works soever he may be, all which works they immediately make to be nought by their powerful accusations; and that no one will ever obtain salvation, but he, who, despairing of all his own merits and worthiness, apprehends the only and all-free mercy of God by faith and hope, and firmly holds it fast, trusting that he shall be saved by that, and can be saved by that only. So that all singing must be, not to ourselves, but unto God alone, who saves us, undeserving any such thing, by his mercy only; in which salvation the heart may rejoice. For if any thing else availed unto salvation besides the mercy of God, David would without doubt have shewn it here. Nay, he confessed that all the counsels of his soul, in which he considered of his merits also, brought him nothing but grief and pain. Therefore, mercy alone is what we must have: it will suffer nothing to be joined with it in which the man may hope at the same time. For this would be for the feet to vary and to halt between two ways, and, for us to worship, like the Samaritans, God and an idol at the same time. Whereas, no one can worship God but by

a pure and alone faith in his mercy. If it be not so, we cannot sing unto God only; nor shall we give thanks unto his grace alone, but unto our idol also which has wrought together with God. But God forbid such a thing at this!

“For he hath returned.”—We are not here to dream of *merits*, of *dignity*, or *condignity*, or *congruity*; as we generally understand this verb “returned” to signify. For as all this is given through mercy only, and freely bestowed upon the undeserving, the singing praise and thanks are due to the giver. But when the reward is given to merits, without mercy, nay, from a demand of justice, there, the praise and singing are due to the worker, and not to the giver. But the impious teachers who hold forth the latter pest of doctrine, extinguish all exultation of heart, and all sweetness of God in men, and take away all his praise. As it is said, Micah ii. 9, “The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses: (that is, from their conscience rejoicing in the salvation of the sweet mercy of God,) and from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.” It is a truth, confirmed by the experience of all men, that those rejoice in, sing of, and bless a benefactor, who know that they have been freely and immeritedly helped by him. How much more should this be the case with God and our thanks to him! How much more should we understand his benefactions to us and give him thanks! Especially, when the man knows that for all those things which he lost under his temptations, or seemed to lose,—for all such losses he afterwards received double from the hand of God.

Wherefore this returning or rewarding implies rather a loss of merits than an acquirement of them, if you look at the meaning of the scripture: or rather, it is an exchange of things: while God kills by making alive; brings men to a knowledge of their being sinners when he justifies them; and, in a word, takes away all things that he may return or give in reward all things. And they who have not this knowledge of the cross, are compelled to be agitated with those thoughts and dreams

about getting a stock of merits, which may be recompensed with rewards of *dignity*, *condignity*, and *congruity*, even by God himself. For even that exultation of the Apostle, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day," I should rather consider as having reference to his adversaries than to his own merits: in this way, As God is a righteous judge he will reward me with, or return unto me, a crown for the dung and filth with which the world confounds me at this day. And therefore, for the glory of the ungodly in which he exults at this day, he will in that day give him in return, shame and contempt. So that he signifies, that the one shall be taken away and the other given to the saint; and that by the free mercy of God. As Joshua the high priest, Zachariah iii. is stripped of his filthy garments, for which Satan accused him, and clothed with a change of raiment; as it is there recorded.

And that expression, which we render 'to me,' (*mihî*) and which is in the Hebrew *ALAI*, 'upon me,' (*super me*) is the same expression as that which we have above, "How far shall mine enemy triumph over me?" And Psalm vii. 8, "According to my innocence upon me." Where we should more properly have rendered the passage, 'According to my innocence to me;' than by that rendering which we taught and took from Hieronymus: for the same expression signifies only motion to a place; as we have it also, Psalm xxxviii. 16, "When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me." And so also it is, Psalm vii. 8, "Judge me according to my innocence upon me;" or "judge toward me," or, "to me:" so that "to me," or "upon me," is to be joined with the word "judge," and not to "innocence."

## P S A L M XIV.

TO VICTORY : OF DAVID.

Ver. 1.—*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, and have become abominable in their doings : there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

This is all one verse in the Hebrew, and the clause “no not one,” is superadded in this place, because we have it once only, and that is at the end of the third verse. The Hebrew runs thus, ‘The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They have done corrupt and abominable doings: there is none that doeth good.’ Here fool is put by the figure *synecdoche*, for the whole people, because it follows in the plural number “they.”

This Psalm is taken out of Gen. vi. where it is said in similar words—that the earth was corrupt by the sons of men; and that the Lord looked down upon the children of men, and iniquity, or badness, (which in the Hebrew is *HAMAS*; that is, injury, violence, and oppression,) had prevailed. Here David says, that the people were “devoured:” and hence the series of history, contained Gen. vi. will beautifully illustrate this Psalm: because it either describes the prevailing of the generation of the ungodly by a like corruption, or foretels that it shall thus prevail: for such a generation always exists, though it may rage and prevail more at one time than at another.

David, therefore, is not speaking at all about the persecution of the godly nor about false teachers: but the intent and scope of the Psalm are to describe and set forth the manners and the life of sinners, or of the corrupt generation.—That all men are sinners and evil who are destitute of, and act without, grace: for such live only in pride, lust, rapine, fraud, murder and the like; though such strive always to colour over these things, or neglect to observe them. And it is to this same point that Paul quotes the Psalm, Rom. iii.



Here the first evil, which is the fountain-spring of all the other evils, is, ignorance of God: for he that sins against the first commandment must transgress every one of the others. And as all the commandments hang and depend upon the first, and are from it regulated and formed, so there is no one that is violated in more ways nor by more men than the first commandment. And we may easily see how very few good men there are among the sons of men, and that there is none that doeth good. For although all may not commit adultery and murder in the act, nor satisfy lust in the act, yet all sin the same sin of unbelief against the first commandment: and, when opportunity is given, they satisfy lust, kill, and commit every evil. And therefore, every son of Adam is this Nabal: that is, this "fool" and idolater, being ignorant of God; as it is here said.

But we are not here to understand that such know nothing whatever of God: for Paul teaches, Rom. i. 'that the name of God is manifestly known by all:' for if there had not been an inextinguishable knowledge of the divinity implanted in the minds of all men, idolatry would never have been found. For why did they worship idols, but because they all had a persuasion that there was some God? Why did they ascribe divinity to men and to devils, and thus turn the truth of God into a lie, if they did not believe and know that there was a divinity or God? Or why did they presume to worship those men and devils, if they did not ascribe to them some existing divinity? They knew therefore that there was a God or divinity. But they erred in this:—They turned the truth of God into a lie; and, on the other hand, a lie into the truth of God. That is, that which was truly God they ascribed unto man, or to the creature; and, on the contrary, that which was not God, or a lie, they ascribed unto God. This they did then, and this they still do, who, not understanding the work and Word of God, blaspheme them and ascribe them to devils. And their own devices, whether it be their words or their works, and even suggested by the devils, they ascribe unto God: and this is the most frequent of all evils.

For those who are described Gen. vi. are not represented as being so ignorant of God that they knew nothing of him, for Noah a preacher of righteousness preached God unto them. But, said God, "My spirit shall not remain in these men for ever, because they are flesh:" or, as the Hebrew has it, 'My spirit shall not always judge or strive in these men:' that is, he has not his operation in them, because they reject the crucifixion of the flesh, and therefore they will not endure the judgment of my spirit. By which words, whether spoken through Noah, or (which I the rather believe) through others also, God designed the same thing as that which is spoken in this Psalm:—namely, he publicly and openly declares that such are flesh, and without, and destitute of, the Spirit: that is, abominable and corrupt, not one of them doing good, no, not one.

David therefore, here speaking in the Spirit, and easily searching into their thoughts, and their reins, and heart, says, that this Nabal denies God, not in word, nor in gesture, nor in external pomp, (wherein he boasts that he knows God even better than those who truly love him,) but in his heart: that is, in his inward thoughts and feelings: which darkness is immediately followed by a darkness of mind, which prevents him either from thinking, speaking, or acting rightly concerning God: as it is said Psalm xi. and Paul to Titus, chap. i. "They say that they know God, but in works deny him." They therefore alone have God, who believe in God by a faith unfeigned. All others are fools, and say in their heart "There is no God."

The other evil, (that is, the great river or flood, rather, of evils,) which proceeds and flows out of this fountain of unbelief, is all their doings; (that is, whatever they think, are wise about, savour, say, do, establish, or act in any way;) all these are corrupt and abominable. As if he had said with Paul, Tit. i. 15, "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled." And thus he briefly in one word declares and sets forth the life of the unbelieving: as it is written also, Rom. xiv. "What-

soever is not of faith is sin." For the word *ÆLILA*, which is here rendered "doings," (as we have it also Psalm ix. "Tell among the people his doings,") is a general noun, and signifies all things that any one may do, such as, counsels, attempts, words, works, and so, all things that a man can do which we understand to be approved and well pleasing unto God when done in faith, and corrupt and abominable when done in unbelief. For the Apostle, Tit. i. 15, when he gives the reason why there is nothing pure to the impure, and why their mind and conscience is defiled, gives none other than this,—that they were unbelieving or destitute of faith, and for that reason abominable, and unto every good work reprobate.

What then will those say here who have hatched up a something about *works morally good*, and *works neuter*? They will do nothing but work doings corrupt, abominable, defiled, unclean, and destitute of faith. For works *not meritorious* and yet *not demeritorious*, *not sins* and yet *not merits*, are all one and the same thing. And yet, it is in this way and with these terms that these miserable deceivers speak, extinguishing the fear of God, and flattering and pleasing men, and all the while setting aside the grace of faith. But the Apostle withstands all such even upon their own grounds, Rom. xiv. where he saith, 'That every thing which is not of faith is sin.' For these men make their conscience faith: and therein they speak well and healthfully; not less so, than Caiaphas prophesied: excepting that, they do not understand what they themselves thus say, even as also Caiaphas did not understand what he said. For if a man does any thing in act or life which he does not believe pleases God, that is, which is contrary to his conscience, he builds unto hell. And therefore, all their works and doings which they do contrary to their conscience, that is, which are not of faith, or, which they do not believe are well pleasing to God,—all such works they build up unto hell. And this is most true; for every Christian man ought to believe that all which he does pleases God.

## CONCERNING FAITH AND WORKS.

As this place calls upon us to speak of Faith and Works, we must indulge in a few observations: as we have done before concerning Hope and Passions, Psalm v. and we shall do the same concerning Love and Kindnesses, in its proper place.

First of all, this is certain,—that of all the commandments of God, the first, highest, and greatest is, that which is written in the first place in the Decalogue of Moses, “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt: thou shalt have no strange gods before me,” &c. The proper works of which commandment (the *elicited* and *immediate* works as they call them) are, to believe in, to hope in, to love, and to fear God, and those things which are of God. These works the teachers of our day call *elicited habits and acts*. And therefore, having fallen into a dead letter, they consider external works to be these habits and acts; such as, praying with the lips, bending the knee, and other ceremonies of that kind. And being blinded with this theology, they cannot understand the words of the divine scripture, where they teach concerning the work of God, faith, hope, love, and fear. For the greater part of the whole scripture tends to this,—to set forth and commend the work of God, that is, faith: as in Isaiah v. 12, “But they regard not the work of the Lord.” And John vi. 29, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” And again Psalm lxxxi. 8, “O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.” As if he had said, This shall be the work and the worship of God,—if thou shalt believe or hear; that is, faith is the true service, and the first work of the first commandment.

Wherefore, he that would understand the scriptures, must leave all the philosophical ways of theologians, and

must understand this term, THE WORK OF GOD; and learn to apply it with as much force to the internal acts of the soul, (which they call *elicited acts*,) as they have applied it to the external acts, (which they call *commanded* and *mediate acts*,) or, (which shews their blindness to be the more awful,) which they apply to the works of the creation; which are wrought of God out of, and independent of, all men.

But as that man who omits the first precept, and yet keeps all the other works, both divine and human, does nothing at all: so, he does nothing at all, who does all that he does, or omits all that he omits, without faith in God. For, as the first precept is the measure, standard, rule, and virtue of all the other precepts; from which first precept, as from the head, all the other precepts hang, and receive life and influence: so faith, the work of the same precept, is the life, power, and virtue of all other works, and is, in the greatest truth, that universal reality, which is the one thing needful in all things: so that, no work is good, unless faith be the operating spring of it: nay, unless it be wholly imbued and anointed with faith as with a new leaven.

And there can by no means be faith, unless there be a certain living and undoubting mind, whereby the man is assured, with all certainty, that he pleases God, and has him as a propitious and pardoning God in all things which he does and carries on; propitious in good things, and pardoning in evils. For what is faith if there be not this state of mind? And the Apostle proves true faith to be such as this in many examples, Hebrews xi. And Christ, in the Gospel, when he is about to display his power, generally asks them first, whether they believe that he is able and willing to do it. And therefore, it is written of him, Matt. xiii. that he could not do many works in his own country because of their unbelief. And, Matt. xvii. he says, that his disciples could not cast out devils because of their unbelief.

From this we may see whence that word of the Apostle flowed, Rom. xiv. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." And that of Titus i. 15, "But even their mind

and conscience is defiled." And why is this? because they are destitute of faith; and it is faith alone that purifies the heart, (Acts xv.) and fulfils all the commandments of God. Observe this, therefore, 'In every work of thine believe,' 'Faith is the keeping of the commandments of God.' But is not this a new kind of thing to the theologians of our day? And that also is equally new which we have, Eccles. ix. 7, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart: for God now accepteth thy works;" where the Hebrew is, KIKEBAR RAZA HAÆLOHIM ETH MAÆSECHA. But this BAR may be variously rendered, thus, 'For thy works are like a son (or elect, or pure,) which pleaseth his father.' Or thus, 'Thy works are like the works of a son that pleaseth his father.' So that the meaning of the whole is, 'Be thou always joyful and happy, knowing, that whatsoever thou doest, is, in the approbation of God, like the actions of a chosen and beloved son in the sight of his father. And in this way also it is expressed, Malachi iii. 17, "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." And then it follows in the same passage, Eccles. ix. "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun." Here, "garments" and "oil" (though many understand them, not improperly, to signify works and joyfulness,) may, I think, be received as having a literal signification: because there was a custom of putting on white garments upon days of rejoicing, and dark or black garments or sackcloth upon days of mourning, and especially among the people of the nation in the midst of whom Solomon wrote: so that, these "garments" and "oil" signify the circumstances of joy, both with respect to the food and the clothing. And thus also Christ saith, Matt. vi. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint

thy head and wash thy face :” that is, be of a glad and cheerful countenance.

Those, therefore, act most perniciously, who, professing themselves to be teachers illuminated by faith, deny that this faith is necessary at all times, and in every work : and they hatch up and frame out to us a general kind of faith sleeping in the *habit*, or rather a dead faith, which for the time *elicits the act of believing*. But what time will they define for this act ? Is it only during the time of immediate exercise ? But what a great folly possesses them, if they compare faith and its work with the use and nature of all other virtues ? By this they would make it to be the case, that, because we cannot at all times pray, read, visit the sick, and help the weak ; nay, because we cannot do any one work perpetually and continually, therefore, (as they think,) faith must be subject to the same change as the works, sometimes working or acting, and sometimes resting or doing nothing : not understanding, that under all the change and variety of works faith remains the same, believing and being confident in every work, that it pleases God, or rather, that he is pardoning and propitious.

It is an error, therefore, to put faith and its work upon a footing with the other virtues and works. For this faith must be held as being exalted above all these things, and as being a sort of general and inaccessible influence above all works ; by the moving and agency of which it is that all works which are done by man move, act, flourish, and please God. Thus Samuel, 1 Sam. x. 6, ‘ And the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. When, therefore, all these signs are come unto thee, do whatsoever cometh into thy hands ; for God is with thee.’ So, in faith, all works are equal, howsoever they may present themselves unto us to be done : for faith alone is the work of all works. But wheresoever a difference of works is made, there either faith is wanting, or else, the difference only appears to be such in the eyes of those who are ignorant in these matters. For when a man believes in God,

whether he fasts, or prays, or serves a brother, it is all one and the same: for he knows that he serves and pleases God equally, whether his works be great or small, precious or vile, short or long. Nor does he in particular choose any one work, nor does he reprobate any one; but, as Samuel said to Saul, he does whatsoever comes into his hands to do. But where there is not this faith, there will be always found a fermenting toil of distinguishing, choosing, and rejecting works; while such, with an impious opinion, believe, that by such a work they shall please God more, and by such a work less: which iniquity is full of labour, toil, and solicitude; in the Hebrew called AVEN and AMAL, as we have abundantly shewn before.

The impious folly of these men is a certain spiritual simony; they wish to buy God with works. For what they do is this:—they suppose, that in doing and after doing these works, they shall have faith in God; and thus, they make God to be appeased and rendered propitious by their works: whereas, we ought to have God propitious to us first by faith, and then, in that faith to do good works: that thus, that which pleases God may be of preventing grace, and not of our own power and merits. For no one can please God *because* he does good works; but he does good works *because* he pleases God. So that, the cause of the works being good, is the faith by which a man knows that he pleases God: but works are not the cause of that faith which pleases God. And hence it is impossible, but that those must trust more in their own works than in God, though (as hypocrites always lie) they boast that they trust in God alone. And thus they always remain reprobate concerning faith, yet always pretending that they trust in God. It is past all belief how secret, deep, and great this evil of the human heart is: for it not only clothes and feeds itself with its own works with an insuperable and desperate perverseness, but boasts of the title and value of that very faith which it directly militates against, and flatters itself in the possession of it. David prayed against this, Psalm li. “Create in me a



clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me." And Psalm xix. 13, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me : then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

If any one could but see how many of the most specious and showy work-mongers this iniquity destroys, he would then understand that of Eccles. viii. 10, "And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the place where they had so done." In a word, there is not an evil more natural to man nor to be rooted out with more care, than this subtle presumption, which always strives to be before-hand with God and to render him propitious by its own works. From which natural enormity have proceeded also all those impious dogmas and doctrines in the church, by which men are driven on to works and indulgences in order to appease God and to make satisfaction for their sins, entirely setting aside faith. And I believe that this radical evil and all-specious idol of the spirit, (as we have it called, Psalm xxxii.) is never extinguished, no, nor even known until a man has been exercised with those deeper temptations of death, hell, conscience, (or, faith and hope,) and predestination, and others of the same kind. All other things rather increase than take away this natural evil, even though they may be the greatest of virtues or works.

And the same destruction attends them also who deny that all works done without faith are sins, as we have shewn before. For if you should say by way of question, whether a good work (as they may call it) when done in the pursuit of adultery, murder, or theft, or, when done in rebellion or disobedience, would not be a sin ; they would without doubt answer, that it was a sin. Why then do they ascribe so much goodness of working to the man that sins against the first commandment and does his good work in disobedience towards God, (that is, in unbelief,)—why, I say, do they ascribe so much goodness to such an one as to say that his work

is not a sin? Are not, then, disobedience with respect to God and unbelief as great sins as the pursuit or intent of adultery, and the neglect of chastity?

But the sin of unbelief is deep, and of all the most natural, nay, committed by nature herself: concerning which David says, "All men are liars:" the natural man cannot acknowledge this sin in himself: but as to the sins of the flesh, such as theft, murder, and human rebellion, they are wrought by the grosser parts of the senses and the body, and therefore they are easily understood by his higher faculties, the soul and the understanding: whereas, the soul itself cannot perceive the incomparably greater sin and "beam" that is in its own eye, though it so easily perceives the "mote" that is in the body's eye. Such is the nature of hypocrites and of all who are unclean in spirit, until they have been exercised and tried by the powerful and spiritual perils of death and hell.

In this same way, lime grows harder and colder until water be poured upon it. And hence, the wise man rightly saith that the beginning or fountain-spring of sin, or rather the principal and greatest of all sins, is departing from God: of which the members, as it were, are rebellions, lusts, murders, thefts, and every thing that comes under the name of sin. By which things God, as it were, admonishes us to think and consider thus,—if these things are so great and so foul, how great and foul must be the manifold and many-mouthed head and spring of all these foul streams; that is, unbelief itself; which is the very palace from which they all proceed, and which renders dead every work that is done, by its very touch and look. What then are a number of good works without faith, but, (as Christ says,) a whited sepulchre, which within is full of dead men's bones, and all filth and iniquity.

And here also that common saying about 'putting and taking away the bar,' falls to the ground. For if to commit adultery, to steal, and to kill, be to 'put the bar,' how many good works soever a person may do, and howsoever he may dispose himself; how much more

will not believing in God be 'putting the bar,' though a man in the mean time may do never so many of his good works? For the commandment to believe in God, is of far greater weight and importance than not to commit adultery, and not to steal or kill. Wherefore, the omission of faith which is commanded in the first table, far exceeds in enormity the commission of any of those sins which are prohibited in the second table. Thus, as unbelief is the fountain of all evils, and prevents any good work, or, if the work be done, renders it polluted, and makes the man prone to every sin; so, on the contrary, faith is the fountain of all good, and will not permit any thing evil to be done, or, if any thing evil be done, immediately takes it away and cleanses the man, and renders him prone to all good works. Hence, when Adam and Eve had sinned, they immediately felt lust, or the fruit of their unbelief and sin in their members: whereas, in John vii. 38, it is on the contrary written, "He that believeth in me, as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." And 2 Tim. ii. 19, it is written, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Wherefore, let us firmly hold that the first precept is the head and foundation or beginning of all the other precepts, and that its fruits or fulfilment is the head and beginning of all works; and also, that the moral philosophy of the Peripatetics errs altogether from the way, which saith, 'That by doing just and temperate things we are rendered just and temperate.' But not so ye ungodly! not so! But we must be made just and temperate first, and then do just and temperate things. And we are made just or righteous by that faith which believes that God is propitious unto us; and this is the faith that God has commanded, saying, "I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have none other gods but me." For as we believe so it is done unto us. For faith is not here deceived: he is rather deceived who fears this, or doubts or hesitates to believe it.

But you will say, How can it be that I can believe that in all works I please God, or that God is always

and continually propitious to me, when I must sometimes talk, eat, drink, and laugh with my neighbour, nay, sometimes joke also and enjoy the mutual consolation of pleasant converse? And what if I sometimes sin in the very act, and even run into some great fall of wrath, lust, and evil concupiscence? And who is that man who does not sometimes offend in word, as James says in his Epistle? Nay even you yourself also teach that there is sin or defilement in every word. Can, then, sin and pollution please God?

I answer: *First*, with respect to the *works of familiar intercourse*.—Hypocrites, who have confined the works of God within their narrow straits, are rigid and implacable censurers of those works which are done by honest and proper familiarity and friendship: such as lively converse and society, acute and witty observations and sayings, a pleasant and jocund laugh. For I do not here mean scurrilous remarks, profane laughing, or filthy conversation: because not even the human rules of living allow of such things as those. But as this life cannot pass without society, it certainly becomes thee to believe, that thou pleasest God when thou speakest to thy brother with a jocund countenance, when thou invitest him to pleasantry by a cheering laugh, and when thou sometimes delightest him with a facetious or shrewd remark. For this is that “gentleness” (*χρηστοτης*) commended by Paul, Gal. v. 22, which they call kindness and sweetness of conversation, and which the same Apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 4, commands us to shew forth, saying, “In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience,” &c.; and afterwards, ver. 6, “by kindness, in the Holy Ghost;” where he adds “in the Holy Ghost,” that this kindness, companionableness, or pleasantry may not, as it is often wont to do, degenerate into levity, and effuse scurrility, and a certain licence to say any thing and do any thing, until, out of this kindness, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, they make a deadly familiarity, which is the fruit of the unclean spirit of man. Thus it is read of St. Bernard, that when he wished to comfort a brother who was dejected in mind,

he jested with him by putting his foot out and holding it so as to throw him down, and then said that he did it ‘*otiosus sed non otiose.*’ And if any thing of sin (as we are always to fear is the case) has crept in through ignorance, it is overcome by that faith in God, by which we believe that we so please him, that he pardons what of sin there may be in us; for he always shews himself to be unto us that which we believe him to be.

And *secondly*, with respect to *manifest or outward sins*.—I would say that of Proverbs xxiv. 16, “A just man falleth seven times and riseth up again, but the wicked falleth into mischief.” For the wicked man differs from the just in this. The wicked believes that he pleases God by his works and overcomes thereby: and hence, when he falls he never rises again, because he has no other way of rising up again than by his works, whereby he may please God and turn him to his own wishes, as he imagines: and as he cannot do this, and therefore cannot find any peace of heart, he of necessity falls into despair. But the just or righteous man, who knows that God has not only promised and previously made provision, but has also pre-commanded above all works, faith and hope in him, does not rise up again, because he trusts to and rests on his own works, nor does he lie and there remain because he has fallen; but, mindful of the promise and precept of God, he keeps the propitious mercy of God before his eyes; which God has commanded him to do, where he has said, “I am the Lord thy God,” &c. And this is what David did, Psalm xxvi. 3, “For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.” Thus he was sustained and supported by the Word and precept of God, that he might not rush with the wicked into the evil of desperation.

And, as the wicked and the righteous strive in a different, yea, in a contrary way, so do they aim at a different end. The wicked strives by his works to run upon God; but the just desires to come forth from God and be begotten again by faith. The former proposes to himself, to do away with the necessity of God’s

righteousness by the works of his own strength; the latter sets before him the mercy of God which may heal all his infirmities. And these things ought to be exactly as they are between a father and a son. For the son, if he has at any time done wrong, fears indeed his father, but does not let go his confidence in his father's loving-kindness; and yet he is ready with humble confession to bear the paternal discipline. As we have shewn from Malachi iii. 17, "And I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." And Psalm lxxxix. 32, 33, "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."

Here, I would prudently and purposely pass by all those questions of recent theologians:—such as, 'Whether faith perishes with mortal sin?' and 'What mortal sin is?' Such things, I say, I would purposely pass by, because such are not properly matured in these matters: they know not what faith is, or what mortal sin is: but they arrogate to themselves the power of determining with how great a sin faith can stand or cannot stand, and take that determination out of the hands of God. But "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him," Psalm xxv. 15.

In the *third* place, with regard to *the sin in good works*.—I lay it down as an established truth, that there is no good work of our own whereby we can please God. Hence the church prays, 'O Lord judge me not according to my doing, for I do nothing worthy of thy sight.' And again, 'So that wherein we cannot please thee by our doings,' &c. And this is the glory and grace of faith,—that it alone is the work that is well-pleasing unto God, which work makes all our works well-pleasing unto him, and takes out of the way all that are displeasing unto him. For if all our other works were not sins and displeasing unto God, there would be no need of faith to take them out of the way. Wherefore, we may learn from the virtue itself, and from the necessity of faith, that we must ever despair of all our own works,

and, setting before us the mercy of God, to struggle with the judgment of God: as James saith, ii. 13, "And mercy rejoiceth against judgment:" that is, mercy glories over judgment; and faith in the mercy of God for justification, is more powerful than the fear of the judgment of God, for the condemnation of our conscience.

Wherefore, we have always a cause for fear, since all that we do of ourselves is evil, and of itself, damnable. But again, under this same fear we have always occasion for believing, and of fighting against the fear of the judgment of God, by faith in his mercy, and of triumphing and glorying in that faith and its conquest: so that the words of the Psalm may be fulfilled, "The Lord is well pleased with them that fear him, with them that hope in his mercy." And so also John saith, 1 Epist. ii. 1, 2, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." And again, the same Apostle saith, chap. iii. 20, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," &c.

From all these things, therefore, it will plainly appear, what and how we ought to think of CEREMONIES, and how far we ought to use them. Concerning which ceremonies, as there have been various disputations, even by the ancient fathers; and as they are at this day adorned and set off by many, and, on the other hand, utterly despised and set aside by many,—as this is the case, we will here speak a little concerning them.

First of all, it is certain that in the New Testament there was only one ceremony divinely instituted, that is, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and this was appointed, that the people might assemble together to hear the Word and to pray. In which ceremony also, those who had been converted and instructed by the Word, having partaken of the holy bread, might be confirmed and comforted. All other ceremonies have been instituted and increased by ecclesiastical decrees; until they have made the church at this day to be nothing but a

heap of mere ceremonies, while all the commands of God are utterly cast out.

Wherefore we ought here to learn, that we are not to decline to the right hand nor to the left : that is, that we are neither to be too much taken up with ceremonies, nor too much to despise them ; but, keeping the right and middle way, at a proper time to observe them, and at a proper time to disregard them. In which matter there is no one thing that can more safely, faithfully, and surely direct us than faith and love themselves. —These, I say, will lead and direct us far more surely, faithfully, and safely than all the Dispensations, Epieikiai, and Interpretations of all the popes and all the learned men put together.

Let this then be an established certainty :—that this life cannot possibly be lived without ceremonies. For as we are in the body and in the midst of temporal things, we cannot avoid differences of times, works, places, duties, persons and other things. And as the Apostle saith, (Rom. xii. and 1 Cor. xii.) there is one body, but many members, and all members have not the same office. And, if you take away all ceremonies, where will remain any government, power, rule, magisterial authority, or office ; or, in a word, any administration in the world whatever ? For you cannot rule your house nor family, nor even your children, unless you allot certain times, places, and duties, and perform those duties with certain ceremonies ; nay, you cannot even properly exercise and direct yourself without certain hours, places, and occupations. And indeed, your body will not permit you to live otherwise than thus, even as far as its well being and health are concerned. For what can you do, or how can you live, if you appoint to yourself no time, no place, no work, no duty, and no personal engagements.

Moreover, what are the external works themselves of the commandments of God and of the whole gospel, but certain ceremonies ? What are praying, fasting, watching, labouring with the hand, helping our neigh-



bour, &c. but certain ceremonies? Profane ceremonies, however, or political laws and rites in secular things, or customs, or by what other name soever they may be called, are much more required, and, of necessity, many and various. But sacred ceremonies and ecclesiastical rites, or (as they are called) rites in spiritual things, are much more perilous: because it is so natural to conceive a vain confidence in these kind of works when they are duly performed, and a foolish fear because of them when they are omitted: that is, there is a most defiled state of conscience in either respect.

And here, that faith which a man has in God, is in great waves of peril if there be not a faithful and wise servant of the Lord who knows how to separate the precious from the vile. For if the man has begun to trust in those ceremonies when performed, or to distrust when they are not, faith has perished; which faith ought to use those ceremonies as a rider does a horse. But the case is, that these ceremonies themselves now reign which ought to be things quite subservient; and as it is said, Eccles. x. 7, "I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." There is a danger, I say, lest the ceremonialist should trust that he pleases God on account of his ceremonies, being deceived by a false appearance of things, and because he is employed in those things which pertain unto God. Which peril, in temporal things, is very little or none at all; and it is so plain and common a thing, that he who is inflated and puffed up in these ceremonies is even marked out among men for his foolish confidence, or, as it is called, *φιλαυτια*, because all such pride and confidence are among the common things of the world.

Wherefore, we are to use ceremonies in faith and love, that they may be useful; without which faith and love, they cannot but be hurtful and leading to perdition. For if all other good works are destructive when done without faith, how much more shall those works lead to perdition which are only done in the performance of ceremonies appointed of man?—And works and ceremonies are then done in faith and love, where they are

not done from any urging necessity, nor because they are good, nor because they are commanded, but, when they are done in a freedom of spirit: that is, when the man has a persuasion that he pleases God even in those things which are indifferent in themselves: thus making, by this his faith, that an advantage to him, which was neither a benefit nor a loss in itself; and making that good, which in itself had no goodness at all.

And he is moved to do this, not because he thinks to procure many merits to himself in these things, but, for this cause only,—because he must of necessity live in the body, which cannot be done without ceremonies; though he himself does not stand in any need of these ceremonies, being abundantly filled with merits by his faith only. And another reason is, because he must of necessity have his life and conversation with them who have need of profane ceremonies in the administration of the perishable things of this world, or, with the weaklings and little ones of Christ, who have need of the sacred ceremonies under which they are to be brought and nourished up as under schoolmasters of the corporal law, until they themselves grow up into the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as Peter saith. For the Christian man is a debtor to both from love, and required to attemper himself to the manners of those with whom he lives. Nay, he is not only to attemper himself to these ceremonies and manners, but also, through their means, to serve those characters, lest his foolishly used confidence should despise the weak, or the secular, and political government, and thus offend both, which is contrary to love.

Thus Christ, Matt. xvii, that he might not offend the Roman publicans or tax-gatherers, commanded Peter to pay a *stater* as tribute. And Paul, Titus iii. 1, commanded that the saints be put in mind “to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.” And we have the same Rom. xiii. and 1 Pet. ii. 13, “Subject yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme,” &c. Not that these things are

necessary unto the justification of the faithful, whose righteousness Christ is, but that in love they may serve all men, and that, by this good example they may call and allure over unto Christ the unbelieving and evil; and that, as Paul saith, Titus ii. 10, "They may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things:" and may, as he saith 1 Cor. x. 'Please all in all things:' even as the Apostle himself says, that he pleased all in all things, not seeking that which was profitable to himself, but that which was profitable to all, that they might be saved.

And here no one has liberty to boast that he knows that all things are neuter, and indifferent, and lawful to him, and that it is faith alone that justifies; because the Apostle has long also provided against this; saying, 1 Cor. viii. 1, "We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." And again, chap. x. 23, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." And again, ver. 29, "For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?" Why then are all things lawful and yet not expedient? Because all do not know that all things are lawful. And therefore, my knowledge cannot be judged nor condemned by another man's ignorant conscience. My knowledge, therefore, ought to submit itself for a time and to serve his ignorance, nor ought it to be puffed up against him; so that the love that serveth his ignorance or weakness of conscience, is better than the knowledge puffed up that condemns and domineers over his ignorance. Even as Christ died for us for a time, in order to be subservient to our sins and infirmities, as we have it taught, Rom. v.

And to this we ought to be moved by the consideration, that this knowledge of ours renders us safe, so that the works of ceremonies cannot hurt us when we know that we are justified by faith. And again, we ought to be moved to this, by the knowing that we have good things in Christ, and have no longer to labour under considerations and thoughts about the manner in which we may be justified. And therefore, all our life from hence-

forth should be lived to the benefit of our neighbour: as Christ lived for us; and, as we do all other things for their good, much more should we attend to these indifferent ceremonies for their good. And therefore, we owe no man any thing but to love one another: and by this love it comes to pass that all things whatsoever we do are good; and yet, we seek not to be justified by our works; and this is to be a Christian.

I will now only add one thing, and bring these observations to an end.—If any one shall perceive that he has a confidence or trust in the works of ceremonies, let him be bold, and at length cast them off: and in this let him not wait for any dispensation or power from the Pope: for in these matters every Christian is a pope and a church to himself: nor should any thing be decreed concerning him, nor should he abide by any thing that is decreed, which can in any way lead his faith into peril. But if he shall wish to communicate with his neighbour upon this matter, in order that he may be rendered the more certain by his word, (according to that scripture, “If any two of you shall agree upon earth concerning any thing,” &c. Matt. xviii.) he does well.

These thing I have said, because I know how pertinacious and closely cleaving an evil a confidence in our own works is, and how pernicious a thing the superstition of human laws is to the sincerity of faith.—Behold, therefore, how free all things are unto us by faith! and yet all things are subservient with us because of love: so that there is at the same time the servitude of liberty, and the liberty of servitude; because we owe no one any thing but to love one another. Thus Christ saith, John x. 9, “I am the door: by me if any man enter, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” The ‘going into’ Christ, is faith which brings us into the riches of the righteousness of God, by which righteousness we now satisfy God and are justified and righteous, wanting no works whatever to form a righteousness for ourselves. And this ‘going out’ is love, which causes us, thus clothed with the righteousness of God,

to lay ourselves out for the service and benefit of our neighbour, and to the exercising of our own bodies, in order to be enabled to supply the wants of another's poverty: so that they being drawn by us, may with us enter into Christ. For as Christ came out from God and drew us, seeking nothing of his own in all his life but only ours; so, when we have entered in by faith, we ought also to go in order to draw and attract others, seeking nothing else but that we may serve all, and save many, together with ourselves.

But to return to the Psalm, it is sufficiently manifest that nothing is pure to the unbelieving; but, because they are flesh, and the Spirit of the Lord reigneth not in them, all their pursuits are corrupt and stinking, and are such as flesh is; namely, foul, polluted, corrupt, abominable; and this they manifestly appear to be, not only in death, but also in life, by their many and multifarious corruptions.—In the Hebrew, however, both these verbs are active, “They have corrupted and made abominable (*abominaverunt*) their works” (if we may so speak). Or rather, we may make the verbs transitive, thus, “They have done corrupt and abominable doings:” for it is the same verb as that which is found Gen. vi. “All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth;” that is, had made their way corrupt. And here, even our neutralists will admit, that every way of fools is corrupt and abominable. And the Psalmist adds, “And there is none that doeth good, no not one:” whereby he teaches, that there is nothing good in man at all, but that they are wholly evil.

Ver. 2. *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*

This verse is thus delivered after the manner of Moses, Gen. vi.; for he had there said, “And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth.” Again, “When God saw that the earth was corrupt.” For David wishes, by the use of the same verb, to express a sameness of state in the world: that,

as those of his day evinced the same corruptions and evils as those before the flood, so they might be described and reprov'd in the same words; but, for another end; for the former were destroyed by a deluge, but the latter are called to a knowledge of their sins, that they might be saved through the better flood of baptism. For this is what Paul sets forth, Rom. i. ii. and iii. reprov'ing all of sin, both Jews and Greeks, that God might have mercy upon all. And hence, this Psalm concludes with a sweet promise, saying, "Who will give the salvation of Israel out of Zion? When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be right glad."

And here, the Lord is said to look down from heaven upon the children of men; contrary to the ignorance of the fool, who saith, "There is no God." As if the Psalmist had said, There is not only a God, but he also sees, nay beholds and observes all things, that is, by his sight he penetrates into and marks all things. And then, that no one might imagine that those fools and men of corrupt doings are men in a certain corner of the world, (that is, those men among whom there is no one that doeth good,) he speaks in a general way unto all; saying, that the Lord looks down from heaven, and from thence beholds and observes all men, and that no one lies hid from him: so we have it Gen. vi. "And he saw that the whole earth was corrupt."

And he says "the children of men," that we may thereby equally understand the whole of mankind. In which words, two things are tacitly implied.

The *one* is, that there is one Son of Man only, by whom alone the children of men are justified: on whose account it is, that the scripture uses this mode of expression, 'sons (or children) of men,' when it would express universality. For he is the Son of Man, but not the sons of men; and all the rest are the sons of men and sinners, born and conceived in the sins of men. For the mouth of the Holy Ghost is humble and gentle: because, when he would represent men as most pesti-

lential, he rebukes them as being so by the mild appellation of 'sons, or children of men.' In which expression, though gentle and mild, is fully comprehended all the misery and evil of man.

The *other* thing is, that men appear to be one thing in the sight of God and another in the sight of men. In the sight of God no flesh living glories or boasts, as the Apostle saith, Rom. iii. : thereby beautifully shewing, that both these views of men are to be considered in the present verse of this Psalm ; where it is said, that the Lord passed this judgment looking down from heaven, and not man looking upon the earth. For men do not see in each other, at least not in all, that these doings are corrupt, but even praise them, and sometimes proclaim them forth with great glory and honour,—such as their abilities, their arts, their deeds, and their moral virtues, (as they call them.) But, among all those other things, do they not celebrate the most of all that which is the worst of all? For who does not rank the glory of wars (that is, the shedding of human blood,) as the highest summit of excellence among men? What are Homer, Virgil, and the rest of the poets, but the most bloody and most cruel proclaimers, inflamers, and boasters, of the most terribly murderous tyrants, and of those who have been the most savage shedders of human blood and destroyers of the human race? So much so, that there is a peril, if a Christian man read these books, lest he should imbibe a delight in this blood-thirsty glory ; or lest, being caught with the honied eloquence that sets forth these slaughters of the human race, nay, being carried away by an innate thirst for human blood, he should be led to make it his greatest pleasure to murder and destroy.

To pass by, therefore, and say nothing about all filthy-tongued and lascivious poets,—would not the children of men, if they were clear in every other respect, be plainly proved to be most blood-thirsty to a man, from their delight in war only? For only consider how great this fury and darkness must be when men rejoice in slaughter, bloodshed, murder, and all that

chaos of evil which war brings on, when all ought rather to weep tears of blood; and especially where the war is carried on, not by the command of God, but from the mere lust of reigning and possessing; as the gentile nations did of old, and still do; and as we Christians (with shame be it spoken!) do at this day, who are the people of peace, and the children of God.

And again, the Hebrew here says, by a transitive verb, 'The Lord made to look down:' whereby it is shewn, that the Lord not only looked down himself, but made others to look and observe also; that is, he revealed all this to his prophets, who might declare to the children of men what they are, and what they ought to do before God. If this had not been the case, how could Noah have known that the earth was corrupt before God? how could he have known it if God had not revealed it unto him? And this is what the scripture tacitly declares, when it says, 'The earth was corrupt *before God*:' he saith 'before *God*:' because, before men, it seems to be quite the contrary. Hence, faith is necessary to understand these words, even as the same faith is also necessary for Paul to be believed where he accuses all men openly as sinners, as being destitute of the glory of God, for he speaks the same things by revelation.

"To see if there were any that did understand or seek after God."—There is here no conjunction, or, in the Hebrew it is inserted badly. The conjunction *and*, however, should be put here, though it is not in the Hebrew, on account of the idiom of that language; for the sense is a copulative sense, "understand and seek after." The Hebrew, language is full and copious in words, which signify understanding, knowing, being wise in, &c. the exact distinction and difference between which I shall not take upon me to set forth.

The prophet seems to describe these children of men as 'fools,' because there is no one instructed nor wise among the children of men. As if he had said not only those are fools who are less informed and instructed among the sons of men, but those also who prate much,



understand nothing, because they never have known any thing, by the taste of spiritual life and experience.

And I am moved to take this as the signification of the verb, which is also given in the title of the 32d Psalm : which is entitled, ‘ The understanding (or instruction) of David ;’ and the same is affixed to many other Psalms also, in which, as it were, the life itself and the experience of David are speaking. The experience, I say ; not that experience which proceeds from the depravity of nature, but that which proceeds from the gift of grace.

And this is an absolute expression, “ There is none that understandeth.” He does not add what it is that is not understood, whether it be God or other things : so that we may understand that this absolute instruction of life is only obtained by experience : and this experience is that which enables a man to judge wisely in every thing and in every kind of doctrine, and to have a right knowledge and wisdom concerning God and all things : and by these means he becomes a person properly qualified to teach others. So that we may not improperly here understand that prating and impudent teachers are set forth by this term and expression ; even as by the following words, ‘ There is none that seeketh after God,’ their hearers and imitators are pointed out.

“ Seeketh after God.”—These words strike at the depravity of our feelings and affections ; even as the former strike at the blindness of our mind : because, where there is no true knowledge of God, there is no true affection towards him ; for all seek their own, as the Apostle saith, except love, which seeketh not her own. And this depravity of the human heart is more subtle than can possibly be known by the natural man, as we have often observed before : for these two things, not understanding, and not seeking after God, include all those enormities mentioned in the 5th Psalm,—ungodliness, malignity, unrighteousness, and lies ; because by these two the mind and conscience are defiled.

Let us therefore take care that we do not receive this ‘ understanding’ to signify the speculations of those

men, who have learned to prate many, great, and singular things, about divine matters, and who, because they have got a knowledge of a few things about experience, begin to judge of, and understand about, the law of the soul as they call it. Nor are we to understand this 'seeking God,' to signify forms of prayer, or self-invented works, or any other self-formed way of striving after the knowledge of God, and, (as they say,) doing meritorious works for the obtaining of eternal salvation. But, 'seeking God' is this,—to seek nothing of our own in any thing, but in all things to seek the glory of God, and the profit and benefit of our neighbour in every thing that we either do or suffer; and that is, to deny ourselves with every thing that is our own, and to become the servants of others; and this is the highest degree of godliness, both toward God and man; and against this godliness none more maliciously fight than those deceitful men and men of blood, who seem to themselves to seek after God, and yet are all the while seeking themselves.

Wherefore, we are to refer this very 'seeking' not to the works but to the affections and the will of the man: and if we do that, we shall see that there is none among the sons of men that seeketh after God, but that all are either openly profane, or, what is worse still, doing all things under a deceitful appearance. And it is in this way that the Apostle Paul introduces this passage, Rom. iii. applying it both to the gentiles, who were openly profane; and also to the Jews, who were saints in outward show only. The Apostle saith, therefore, Rom. iii. 9—12, "We have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are all together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Where the Apostle by this clause, 'There is none righteous,' which is not found in the Psalm before us, seems to collect and set forth the meaning of the first verse, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no

God. They have become corrupt and abominable in their doings, there is none that doeth good." Unless by 'there is none righteous,' he meant 'there is none that doeth good.' Whence we may see that he did not quote the Psalm according to the words but according to the sense.

Where now then is free-will! Where now are moral virtues! Where are the wisdom and the knowledge of practical rectitude in the active powers of men (as they talk)! All these are nothing but the depravities of nature, or rather gifts of God turned into these depravities by the vice of nature; that is, by the blindness of the mind that understandeth nothing, and by the depraved affections which seek not the things of God, but are corrupt, abominable, and reprobate.

Ver. 3.—*They are all gone aside, they are all together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

Behold, with what an abundance of the same expressions David here thunders, that he may comprehend all men in this depravity, and except none. First he says "all," and then "together," and thirdly, "There is none." And this adverb "together," is a Hebraism, whereby David means the whole multitude of men collected together: as in Psalm xii. 23, "Its compactness in itself:" that is, Jerusalem is at unity with all those that are within her. And so Psalm xxxiv. 3, "Let us exalt his name in that thing itself;" that is, all of us assembled together. And so also here, "all together:" and again, they are all together become unprofitable:" that is, all of them together without exception.

And here, we ought to observe the scope and design of the Psalmist.—He saw some among men who seemed to walk rightly, to approach unto God, to be useful and profitable, and to do good works: such as, the externally showy justiciaries, the workers of the law, who were called Pharisees, (that is, *separate*,) from the common herd of sinners, and lived a separate and far different kind of life, and were accounted men of a

remarkable singularity of life and manners. It is on account of these, more especially, that David so repeats the words "all," "together," and "not one;" that he might set forth these men's sins and bring them in guilty; or, as the Apostle saith, "That every mouth might be stopped, and that all the world might become guilty before God;" even their mouths who have so laid themselves out, (but with such ill success,) and have done so much, that they might not come under the class of those who 'turn aside,' are 'unprofitable,' and 'do no good,' and that they might have none of these shocking titles applied to them.—We have here *three things*, "They are all turned aside," "They are all together become unprofitable," "There is none that doeth good." Their turning aside refers to their ungodliness or unbelief, which is the head and fountain-spring of all evils: even as on the contrary godliness or faith is the fountain-spring of all good things, whereby we approach unto God. For "he that cometh to God must believe," as the Apostle saith, Hebrews xi. And what David here says of the 'going aside,' or the drawing back, or the departing, (for the word in the Hebrew here is the same as that of Psalm vi. 'Depart from me,' &c.) he above said of the fools, who say in their heart, "There is no God." For to turn aside from God, and to say in the heart, "There is no God," are one and the same thing; that is, it is, not to believe. Hence Paul saith, Heb. iii. 12, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

This defection from the faith, which the Apostle saw would take place in the church, he seems to call an apostacy: saying, 2 Thess. ii. 3, "Except there come a falling away first;" (that is, an apostacy from the faith, I say: for I do not here understand a falling away of the Roman empire. Here the Apostle means, that the church shall leave her ruler, and the author of her faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be destroyed by the works of men. But, however, the Apostle explains himself, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3, where he saith, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some

shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." These are cutting words, and powerful declarations of the tyranny of the laws of the Roman church, which the Apostle here paints forth in their true colours.

He says, that they have "all" gone out of the way: so that he comprehends and involves in this charge all those also who seem the most to draw near unto God: as the Apostle, 2 Tim. iii. includes among this number those who have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof, together with the proud, blasphemers, and all the rest of those who, he says, shall come forth in the last and perilous times. Nay, as I said before, it is more especially on account of these hypocrites that all these things are said in this Psalm: because those who sin openly are far less dangerous than these hypocrites with their fair outside appearance, who fully imagine themselves, and also diligently persuade others, that none of these things pertain or refer to them, but are spoken of the evil and the ungodly only.

"They are all together become unprofitable." This is the same thing as he said above, they are become corrupt and abominable in their doings. And this applies to the works and lives of apostates, or of those who have gone out of the way. For what can the ungodly and unbelieving man do but what is unprofitable, abominable, corrupt, and stinking in the sight of God, even though it may, in the eyes of men, appear to be useful and good. Hence Isaiah lix. 6, "Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands." And here again he adds the word "together," that he may include both kinds of impious men: that is, those who evince the iniquity of their hearts by open sins, and those who clothe their ungodliness under a fair outside

show, coming to you in sheep's clothing, but being inwardly ravening wolves.

“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Whereby he attacks and exposes their omission:—that they not only do evil, and are unbelieving, but never do any that is good and never are godly. So that thus, by his declaration of their evil and his denial of their good, he absolutely and wholly declares them to be all sinners and the ‘sons of men.’ For when he here adds, ‘No, not one,’ he makes an universal negative, even as in the former case he had made an universal affirmative. And again, on account of hypocrites, that they might not think that they did good when compared with all those others who openly do evil, David says that there is “none that doeth good, no, not one:” that is, there is no one of them that has faith and good works, but they all do evil openly, or else do good only in outward appearance.

As therefore the Holy Spirit brings these affirmative and negative declarations together with such a power of words, and pronounces universally that all are evil and none good, it is wonderful with what subtlety that natural theology of Aristotle has crept in, holding a medium between an affirmative and a negative, and so making its way as to dare to contradict the Spirit, and say, That all the works of man are not evil, but that there are some good, though all these are not meritorious, or, neither meritorious nor demeritorious. But, the scripture must be “a sign that shall be spoken against,” and the water of contention, near which while the children of Israel strive, the judges and chosen men shall be swallowed up.

Paul thrice sets forth these things, Titus i. 16, saying, “Being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.” “Abominable” here signifies unprofitable, rotten and corrupt; “disobedient” (or, ‘unbelieving’) signifies turning out of the way, or drawing back, ungodly, and unfaithful; and “unto every good work reprobate,” signifies not doing one good work. “They profess that they know God, (saith the

Apostle,) but in works deny him:” and herein he involves all hypocrites, as David also does in this place.

And here observe, that the same three things are repeated in this third verse which were spoken in the first verse: but with this difference,—in the first verse the Psalmist as it were expresses his own words and sentiments, but in the third verse he confirms the whole by the divine declarations, which not only accord with his own, but even speaks more widely and universally: because he represents the Lord as seeing the same things from heaven which he saw upon earth. And hence the Apostle, Rom. iii. only adduces that which the Lord saw and declared from heaven, which made more fully to the purpose and design of Paul, who had previously declared that all men and all their works universally were included under sin: and this he did that all might be humbled and might acknowledge the necessity of grace.

Ver. 4.—*Will they not know? all the workers of iniquity who devour my people as the food of bread? They call not upon the Lord.*

“Will they not know” is here put absolutely, for, ‘Will they not at length be brought to knowledge,’ that they may know and feel how much evil they do, while, in their security, and in the neglect of the fear of God, they even think they do well, being blinded with the appearance of things, which appearance is all they know. Whereas they think that they are the last persons of whom it should be said that they know not what they do. ‘We know (say they) what we are doing.’ Nay, they are always ready to become the judges and teachers of all others.

On these “workers of iniquity” or POELE AVEN, we have spoken sufficiently already; having shewn, that they are those who work those things from which peace of heart cannot be obtained, (which peace, as we have said, comes from the work of faith and from godliness alone,) but pain and misery only, and, as the Preacher is accustomed to say, vanity, labour, affliction, sorrow, and

vexation of spirit. For we have said that *AVEN* properly signifies the pain, (which is a fruit contrary to peace,) which attends all those who work out of faith, whether they do that which is good or that which is evil in the sight of men.

Therefore, it is a word of long-suffering and of weariness, or rather, of commiseration, when he says, "Will they not know?" As if he had said, How long will these miserable creatures put away from them the knowledge of their misery, and that they are nothing else but workers or *AVEN*? Will they not at length feel that they are only wearied and worn in their ways, and made more and more men of sorrow? And will they not at length seek the way of peace which passeth all understanding?

This question, however, would be best translated by a simple negation, that it may be the expression of one wishing, "Will they not have knowledge?" For the Latin expression *nonne*, or *nunquid*, (the former of which is in our translation,) shews another affection or feeling in the prophet, the former being an affirmative question, the latter a negative, as grammarians say. But still if any one will contend for it, that by the affirmative question *nonne* is shewn that the ungodly shall at least at some time be brought to a knowledge, that is, in death and at the last judgment; and that, by the negative *nunquid*, is signified that they never shall come to a knowledge, I will not contend against them: for perhaps the Hebrew *HALO* may be rendered by all these interrogatives.

"Who devour my people like the food of bread."— Here he attacks all devourers of the people, that is, all tyrants. They (says Augustine) devour the people who get their profit and gain out of them; not applying their ministry to the glory of God, nor to the salvation of those over whom they are set. David cuts, therefore, at the insatiable avarice and rapacity of the great ones, who exhaust the people by deceits and violence and every art; as we see it now practised in the examples, or rather, enormities of the Roman senate and bishops.



Thus Amos ii. 6, "Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;" (that is, as the Hebrew has it, for money and for corn;) who pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek." And Micah iii. 1, 2, 3, "Is it not for you to know judgment? who hate the good and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron."

We will not here say any thing about the way in which those characters wrought these things among the people of Israel, the same thing is certainly done in the church at this day by the robes of bishops, by their annual offerings, their indulgences, their grants, their privileges, their exemptions, and the impious fairs and festivals of the priesthood. Not to say any thing about the revenues, the redemptions, and the alms, and the quantity of money there is devoured in those things; all which things, if they could be brought to a computation, together with the tributes which are paid to civil magistrates, it will appear and be proved,—first, that not one-third part of the people labour for the food and substance, and that all the rest enjoy what is gotten; and that then, the one same third of the people suffer an exaction and demand upon them more than sixty times in the same year. Thus, the participators and the devourers are by far more in number than the labourers. And hence, it is the greatest of all miracles to me that the men can possibly be nourished even one year with the food and productions which is brought forth from their lands, &c. Nay, I believe that all the produces are continually increased by an invisible miracle, not otherwise than Christ multiplied the loaves in the Gospel. And we are indebted for all this to the Roman tyranny, which by its laws has done nothing else than to make

the number of lazy and devouring men abound more and more, under the appearance of religion and the name of the church; and to make the one whole business of the church to be avarice, rapine, rapacity, and exaction. Why then do we wonder, that the Turks or the Jews should be opulent? The reason is, they all work, while we do nothing but devour.

But as I have said, it greatly concerns pastors to be freed from this vice: for if they be avaricious they not only by their example, but also by their authority, and, what is worse still, by their word, hurt those who are under them; for they will teach nothing else, nor suffer any thing else to be taught, but that which either increases or preserves their gain. We have no need to adduce examples of these things, because they have crept wholly into our manners and even into our articles of faith, and he is deemed a heretic who attacks the avarice of the Pope or the monks: which powers they at this day call, the ruling powers, the monarchy, and the vicegerency of God upon earth, so true is it what Paul saith, "Thinking that gain is godliness;" or, as David here says, The workers of iniquity (AVEN) and the devourers of the people. Hence, Exod. xviii. 21, when Jethro was consulting with Moses about what kind of men they should put over the people, he says, "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds," &c.

The Hebrew here has it, "The eaters of my people have eaten meats:" which is for the sake of explanation, that no one might believe that he spoke of any spiritual devouring, as our translation seems to mean, which, by a similitude says, 'that they devour the people as they would eat bread.' But the Hebrew says, 'that they do nothing among the people but eat bread or meats:' that is, they feed themselves and serve their bellies with insatiable covetousness: which eating and feeding they accomplish at the injury of the people whose substance they devour by infinite methods and means. And when

they thus devour the people, they devour them for this end, that they may eat up all their substance and fill themselves, never giving back any thing for that which they devour: just as the furious covetousness of all the Romanists does at this day.

“They have not called upon the Lord.” Here David gives us the cause and root of this covetousness; namely distrust, or a base and foul unbelief, because they do not trust in the Lord. For faith, as it teaches us to live by the Word of God only, calls continually upon God under every necessity, and depends wholly upon his bounty. When therefore, pastors do not teach faith, and the people do not know it, nothing is left them but to work AVEN, and to become covetous, and say, as we have it, Job xxxi. 24, ‘Gold is my hope, and fine gold my confidence.’ And again, Baruch iii. “And they will heap up gold in which men trust.”

As therefore God commanded in the first precept that no strange god should be had: that is, that there should be no confidence put in any thing else, and that he alone should be called upon under every necessity:—as this is the case, it is evident that covetousness is the service of idols, which so influences them that they call not upon the Lord, nor believe in him, but they rather believe in and call upon gold: and being destroyed by this ungodliness, whatever good they seem to do is all a vain working, and all the pain and labour of ungodliness; that is, AVEN, from whence the conscience can get nothing but disquietude and labour in vain.

*Ver. 5.—There they feared with fear where no fear was, for the Lord is in the generation of the righteous.*

This member, “where no fear was,” is not in the Hebrew, and it seems to have been added for the purpose of explaining the sense.—The Holy Spirit here aptly and properly paints forth the minds and lives of the ungodly. For it is impossible that the heart of man should be without fear; because if his love be right then he is right; but if his love and affections be perverted, then the man is also perverted. But since the ungodly,

when they have lost all trust and confidence in God, cleave to gold and their works only, it must of necessity follow that they must be tormented with the anxious solicitude and fear of losing their gold. And then, as they are not justified by faith as they ought to be, they must be vexed most anxiously and perplexedly with the tormenting traditions of men. So that they are vexed with a two-fold fear ; the one lest they should do wrong, and the other lest they should lose their gold.

Which misery we see so to prevail among all the popes and ecclesiastics at this day, that this verse without the use of any gloss appears with perfect plainness by our only looking at the lives of these characters. For what else is feared at this day among them, than lest the pecuniary affairs of the church should be drawn away, lessened or occupied by others, and lest the patrimony of the cross of St. Peter and of the blessed Virgin and of others should be endangered. With how many statues and decrees is there a caution kept among them, lest any one should speak any thing against these pecuniary concerns? With what thunderbolts do they deter any from intermeddling with them? With what grants, privileges, and defences have they fortified them, so as to make temporal things not temporal? What benedictions, promises, indulgences, titles, bulls, and infinite contrivances have they here used, and do they still use, to multiply, strengthen, and perpetuate all such pecuniary concerns and resources?

And whence are all these armies of cares?—they are because they call not upon the Lord nor believe in him : and therefore they here fear, and endeavour to defend and secure themselves by their own counsels and strength, that they might at no time be brought to want. They are, as Isaiah says, “greedy dogs that can never have enough.” And when even the common sense of men cannot put up with these gross and unprofitable pretexts, and when also there are a few godly and spiritual men, who will not suffer this iniquity to pass by unrebuked, it must be that they must always have occasion for fearing and for hating the truth ; like the Jews, when they

said against Christ, "If we let him go away thus all men will believe in him." When we consider that the heart of man must be either in those things which are of God, or in those which concern himself, we shall easily understand, that such all the ungodly, and especially the great ones, ever have been, are now, and ever will be, from the beginning of the world unto the end. They must always have either their gold for their god, or God for their gold.

And you may see the same thing in their other fear, that is, respecting their traditions. As Isaiah saith, xxix. 13, "Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." And with what snares of laws are the consciences of the faithful here entangled? With what exactions do these task-masters of Pharaoh, by their hard tasks of clay and brick, oppress and drive to bitterness the life of the children of our Israel? Who fears so much in the commandments of God as he does in the commandments of the Pope? Indeed you cannot explain the AVEN better than by setting forth the children of Israel in their bondage under the Egyptians.

Thus the church is full of harassed, confused, and all-scrupulous consciences, which are increased at this day by all those tyrant Romanists, by means of their reserved cases, their exemptions, their censures, and their thousand other arts of destroying the church of God. Add to these the rites, statues, ceremonies, of monasteries and colleges, perversely misinterpreted and maintained by a still worse usage, all tending to the distrust of God and the neglect of faith. And the god of this world thus works in all these the wrath of God, that they may be covetous and also miserable workers: thus being rendered in every respect disquieted and filled with fear, and (as Jeremiah says) "destroyed with a double destruction;" and, what is more, to be bruised by this destruction to all eternity: for they will be deprived of their gold and their works, which they now hold in fear and a scrupulous conscience, by an eternal despair.

And all these things shall happen to them because they call not upon the Lord, for faith is the only thing

that could remedy this wrath of God and this misery ; and as they are destitute of this, they have not the Lord, who is alone in the generation of the righteous : that is, among those, with those, and in those, who believe in him and are justified by this faith, whether the man be a Jew or heathen, great or small, that no one might have to glory at all in person or rank : as Paul saith, 2 Cor. iii. " Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." For here, there is neither the work of AVEN nor anxious care about property, nor a conscience distressed by traditions ; but all things are free, happy, quiet ; the man believes that all that he does pleases God ; he does all that he can for the people of God ; he uses all traditions just as he will, for " the law was not made for a righteous man ;" he wants no such law, being content with the Lord only, whom he has received for his inheritance in the room of all other things. Thus the Psalmist saith, Psalm cxix. " The Lord is my portion in the land of the living." And Psalm xvi. 5, " The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup : thou maintainest my lot."

Thus when all depart and leave us, all their labour, care, and fear leaves us also, and the Lord draws near and takes us up, and we in him find rest, safety, and liberty unto our souls. As Matt. xi. 28, saith, " Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls : for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Thus David glories, Psalm xxvii. 10, " When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

We therefore see here also that " the just man liveth by his faith." Hence, to the workers of iniquity, to the covetous and justiciaries, and to those who call not upon God, David puts as a contrast this " generation of the righteous" who have God, because no one can have God but by faith ; and the generation of the righteous call upon God in all things ; and therefore they fear nothing, they are not wracked with anxious care,

they are not covetous, they do not unprofitable things, but they are in all things the same equal and with any self-chosen deed or works: as Paul saith, Philip. iv. 4, 5, 6, " Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Behold, how beautifully these words of the Apostle accord with the two verses now before us; where he takes away all anxious solicitude, and commands us to call upon God, where he assures that God is near, and teaches us to rejoice, not in the things of this world like the covetous, but in the Lord.

And this member, " They feared with great fear," is a Hebrew idiom, like that of Psalm cxxxii. 16, " And her saints shall rejoice with rejoicing." And that of Psalm xx. ' Thou shalt rejoice him with joy by thy countenance.' So that he intimates that they feared where there was no cause for fear, for there was nothing to frighten them: as we have it, Prov. xxviii. 1, " The wicked flee where none pursueth." And Leviticus xxvi. 36, " The shaking of a leaf shall terrify him." And Deut. xxviii. 65, " The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart." For if the poverty, which the covetous fear, and the traditions of men, had any thing terrible in themselves, they would terrify the righteous also. But these things terrify from the corrupt state of the man's heart, not from any thing that there is in the things themselves. As, on the contrary, the Lord rejoiceth the heart with the blessing of faith wherever it is found: and therefore, such an one rejoices with joy, even though he may not see the Lord but by faith; and he exults, if in nothing else, in this his confidence in God.

But you may say, perhaps, the ungodly would know and do the same if any one were rightly to teach and admonish them. But now, if they hear nothing about such things, what wonder is it if they know nothing about them, and so remain the workers of iniquity, covetous, ignorant of God, and wracked with fears on every side.

—I answer : this is not the case. There are those who advise them, but they will not hear them ; and not only so, but they deride them, load them with insults, and persecute them ; as it now follows,

Ver. 6.—*Ye have confounded the counsel of the poor because the Lord is his refuge.*

He does not say the counsel of the generation of the righteous, but “of the poor ;” though he signifies both under the same term : because, in truth, the generation of the righteous, and those who, despising all earthly things, shine in no distinction of person among men, are alike held of no authority or account in the sight of the swollen-cheeked high and lofty idols of this depraved and perverse generation ; in the midst of whom (as the Apostle saith) they shine as lights in the world, holding the word of life. And therefore, they are before God a righteous generation, but before men they are accounted as unworthy of being believed : nay, as it is said, Wisdom v. 3, 4, they are held by these high ones in derision and a proverb of reproach. “We fools (as it is there said) accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour.” And their counsel is confounded, when it is not only not received (as it ought to be) with the greatest reverence, but is even condemned, hissed at, and laughed at, as heretical, seditious, scandalous, rash, erroneous, and blasphemous : and it is thus that thou wilt be received and misnamed at this day, if thou shalt at all admonish these tyrants and great ones.

In the Hebrew, the verb is transitive, ‘Ye have made to be confounded : that is, ye have caused that his counsel should be shamed, and that it should be loaded with ignominy, both by you and by all others, just as Christ the truth itself was among robbers and wicked doctrines ; which is wrought by your decrees, condemnations, and the commandments of men. As the Apostle writes of the Jews, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, saying, 1 Epist. ii. 16, “Forbidding us to speak to the gentiles that they might be saved.” And this is what



the inquirers into heretical depravity (as they consider themselves) do in this our day, and all oppressors of impious truth (as they suppose they are) with all their followers. And this is a very powerful word that David has here used: he says, “ye have confounded,” not ‘ye have extinguished.’ Because they are they that extinguish the Word of God, who extinguish it in themselves by not believing it: and those also, who believe for a time, and then are carried away by the cares of this life and choke the Word, as the Lord hath set it forth by the seed sown among thorns; yet these do not confound the counsel of the just; they believe, or at least think, that the Word which is possessed by them is true, holy, and good.

As, therefore, the scripture so exactly delineates the lives and manners of the ungodly, it behoves those who are prone to condemn the opinions of all others but themselves as heretical, to take the greatest heed; and especially so if they be persons of authority, name, and consequence among the people. For these are the particular characters whom we see to be painted forth in this verse; nor ought we to be terrified by the madness of such, when we are so fortified by this scripture, which tells us, that all those who are ignorant of God are wont to exhibit such madness; but we ought rather to pity such and to pray for them.

Nor does David less severely strike at the depravity of these characters when he says, “Because the Lord is his refuge.” As if he had said, ye condemn him for no other cause, but because he does not depend upon the multitude nor the magnitude of men, as you do. And therefore, because he stands alone and depends upon nothing but the Lord, while ye depend on and are surrounded by the high and low, ye condemn him with all confidence. For we have said above, that the most plausible of all the arguments of the ungodly, is, that they are supported by the authority of the great and the many, and also by the length of time: and moreover, that they are proved to be in the right by the contemp- tibility, vileness, and fewness of those who speak against

them. By both these bugbears of outward show they are so blinded that they shut their ears, and will not hear nor even once consider what it is that we advance. And thus also the pharisees armed themselves with the multitude and magnitude of the Herodians and all their adherents, against Christ. And hence also, it is very emphatic where David says, "of the poor," ONI; that is, the afflicted, the humbled, and, on that account, despised in the eyes of the Behemoth, who look upon nothing but what is high and lofty.

And he calls it the "counsel" of the poor, not the 'word,' or the 'rebuke or reproof:' whereby he upbraids their madness and aggravates their fault: for their sin would be the less enormous if they condemned their rebuke: but now, they condemn the mild and salutary counsel of the poor, whereby the latter only advise them for their salvation. This verse therefore breathes the language of commiseration,—in this way. Are ye then thus the most miserable of all men? and will ye, relying upon the multitude and magnitude of men, not only not hear, but even extinguish, nay, destroy with the most opprobrious names, that Word which is offered to you only for the sake of your salvation, and as a pious remedy and counsel? will ye, I say, do this, being offended at the poverty, the meanness, and the humility of him who proclaims this Word to you? And are ye not moved at this,—that, although such messenger is not surrounded with the multitude or magnitude of men, yet, the Lord stands by him and is his refuge?

There are indeed many among men, who, esteeming the Word on account of which all the contest is a thing of nought, are driven here and there merely by favour, and go just where they see the multitude to turn: and whenever they see matters taking another turn, they again follow the multitude there. Thus, many followed Christ who afterwards were offended at his crucifixion, and went back again over to the Jews. These are reeds agitated by the winds, useful only for the destruction of the truth in the time of temptation: they are only an offence, and strengthen the hands of the enemies, to

whom they hasten to give strength and influence by their unfaithful obsequiousness, and thus become more injurious than they were before : concerning whom Psalm lxxviii. 9, “The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle ;” because the Lord was not their hope and refuge, but only the glory of their teacher in whom they pleased themselves. Thus Christ said upon the cross, Psalm lxxxviii. 18, “Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.” And again, ‘I am become a reproach unto my neighbours, and a fear unto mine acquaintance.’

*Ver. 7.—Who will give the salvation of Israel out of Zion? When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

I see that this is understood by the eminent fathers as having reference unto the Jews, who in the end shall be converted. If this be true, the Psalm from the beginning should have referred to the times of Christ, when the synagogue was so blinded that many, (namely, the Sadducees,) denied both Spirit and angel, and said that there was no resurrection of the flesh : as Luke shews, Acts xxiii. and Christ says also by the same Evangelist, chap. xxii. “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” For they thus said in their heart, “There is no God :” and then by covetousness, hypocrisy, and unbelief, they were corrupt and abominable in their doings ; and they not only did not receive the counsel of the poor Christ, and his poor apostles, but even condemned them by the greatest ignominy. And it is in this sense that Paul seems to say, Rom. iii. in reference to this Psalm, “Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law.” And it is in this same way that the whole of this Psalm is expounded by Augustine.

And there follows in the same thread of sense, “Who will give out of Zion the salvation of Israel?” As if he had said, It is in vain to preach unto them : their salvation is not in our power, though we comfort

ourselves concerning it, and pray continually; as Paul saith, Rom. x. "My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is, that they might be saved." So that this question in the Psalm proceeds from an anxiously feeling heart, yea, from a heart big with grief and wishing as it were to be accursed from Christ for them, (as Paul saith, Rom. ix. ;) where he does all things in his power; but at length, being prohibited by an insuperable mystery, he saith, But why do I all this? Why do I labour thus? Who can save them? I must at last come to this,—that blindness is in part happened unto Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, "There shall come out of Zion, he shall take away and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this shall be my covenant with them, when I have taken away their sins," Rom. xi. This passage is very difficult of explanation, nor indeed is it explained with sufficient clearness by Paul himself: for he makes no small change in that passage of Isaiah lix. which he adduces: and therefore, neither have I ever understood this mystery or secret counsel with satisfactory clearness.

But if we understand this Psalm, (as we have begun,) as having a reference to all men, we shall not improperly so understand it: and if it be received as applying literally to the Jews alone, we shall have Paul to support such an acceptation of it in those parts of his Epistle to the Romans, which we have already adduced. And this certainly is true; that they are in this respect an example of all the ungodly which are and have been in the church at any age, and will be more especially so in the last days: thus 2 Pet. ii. 6, says, that the people of Sodom were made an example unto those who should after live ungodly. And so also Balaam is set as an example of the same, and Judas. And John also, 1 Epist. iii. sets Cain as an example of those who should act with malignity.

"Who (therefore) will give salvation to Israel? and give it out of Zion?" No one, until the Lord shall turn the captivity of his people, that is, the people who are Israel according to the flesh, and are now held

in the greatest, longest, and most awful captivity, being captive both corporally and spiritually. And it is in this same manner that the captivity of every one of his people must be turned, even those who are not Israel according to the flesh. For, "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it."

And David adds moreover "out of Zion:" that he may shew that there is no salvation to be granted to them nor to any other men but that salvation which is in Christ, and which was given in Zion, and then spread abroad throughout the whole world: and he shews that it is by this that the Jews are to be converted unto Christ, how much soever they may now rage against him: for "there is nothing impossible with God:" and again, Rom. xi. "for God is able to graff them in again." And therefore that is a damnable madness in some Christians, (if they deserve the name of Christians,) who think that they in this shew their obedience to God, and do him service, when they persecute the Jews with utter hatred, think every evil of them, and insult their deplorable misfortunes with the extremity of pride and contempt: whereas according to the strain of this Psalm, and the words of Paul, Rom. ix. they ought to feel deeply for them, sorrow on their account, and pray continually for them. Let such see how they hear Paul, Rom. xi. 18, "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." And again, ver. 20, "Be not high-minded, but fear."

There is here, therefore, a peculiar emphasis in the name Lord; as in Psalm iii. where it is said, salvation is of the Lord. Hence, no one gives salvation, no one turns captivity but the Lord only. And those feelings "shall rejoice" and "shall be glad," have been fully set forth, Psalm v. And also the names Jacob and Israel have been handled, Psalm iv.

## PSALM XV.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

Ver. 1.—*Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?  
and who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

It is in a most appropriate order that this Psalm follows the preceding. For as in the former a representation or description of the ungodly is given, such as the Jews exhibited in the time of Christ, and still do exhibit; so, in this Psalm is given us an example of the godly. Here we see that we are required not only to depart from evil, but also to do good; that we are first to put off the old man with his deeds, and then put on the new man, who is created after God.

And we are to remark first of all, that David here gives us a description of the godly people abstractedly, without mentioning how they are made godly. Whence it happens, that those who are destitute of true wisdom ascribe all the things which are said in this Psalm to moral virtues and free-will, instead of ascribing them to operating grace. So that this Psalm is one of the most easy and simple, as it sets forth the effects of justifying without mentioning the grace itself: and yet is unintelligible to those who are not previously anointed and fortified with the knowledge of grace. Even as also the preceding Psalm is most plain, while it sets forth the life and manners of the ungodly, and the effects of original sin, without mentioning that sin itself: and yet it is most obscure to those who being destitute of the knowledge of that sin, only consider here free-will; to which they ascribe the turning of this captivity, and this ignorance of God, together with all the rest of the evils.

This Psalm strikes most particularly at persons, and the respecters of persons; and then at ceremonialists. For the Jews above all other nations gloried in person, on two accounts; because they only were the seed of the

fathers, and because they alone had the law of God. And therefore on account of the glory of their nation, their wisdom, and their righteousness, they presumed that they alone should dwell in the tabernacle of God: as the Baptist said to them, Luke iii. 8, "And say not within yourselves, we are the seed of Abraham; for God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." And Rom. ii. "Thou that boastest of the law and approvest the things that are more excellent." The prophet, therefore, turning away his face from the presumption of these, to the secret sight of God, where there is no respect of persons, brings forth the truth and attacks them, and at the same time commiserates with them; saying, "Why do they, O Lord, boast of the glory of their race, their wisdom, and their righteousness of the law, and admit none into thy tabernacle but themselves? (For it is thus that men judge.) But thou, with whom is no respect of persons, judgest far otherwise. For that which is high and lofty before men, is abominable in the sight of God."

And the tabernacle here signifies the holy mountain of God and the church of God. But this repetition of tabernacle and holy mountain is not in vain. For tabernacle signifies a tent or military habitation: which implies, that the people of God so live in the church, that they are continually at war with sins, with the world, and with devils; and that, in this respect they cannot be without fear and disquietude, which matter pertains to the mortification of the old man.

And this resting, which in the Hebrew verb signifies also 'inhabiting,' (and that, in peace and quietness, as in a city, or in a castle, or fort, or tower,) which our translator has expressed by 'resting,' signifies the having a secure and quiet conscience, by faith in Christ, even in the midst of the tumults of war; which matter pertains unto the justification of the new man. And therefore, it is more right to put the conjunctions *and*, or, *or*, as it is in the Hebrew.

We see therefore, that this inquiry of the Psalm is not made of any one in general who is in the church of

God, (for there is much chaff among the wheat in that barn-floor;) but the inquiry has reference to those only who are truly of the church, and those to whom the church is the tabernacle or tent of war, and the mountain or hill of peace, who are always fighting and always triumphing therein. Let us then hear what answer is made to this most common inquiry, whereby all inquire what it is to be a good, righteous, and holy man?

Ver. 2.—*He that is without spot and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*

“By their fruits ye shall know them,” saith the Saviour: three of which fruits the Psalmist gives us in this first verse, according to the Hebrew division of it. The first is, to be undefiled in the way. And it is thus, also, that Psalm cxix. begins, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way:” which is, as James i. 27, has it, “to keep himself unspotted from the world.” But this is not spoken concerning carnal purity, which consists in meats, in drinks, in the limbs, or in other righteousnesses of the flesh, or of the Levitical priesthood, or in any worldly ceremonies whatever. But David is speaking in the Spirit of spiritual purity: which is two-fold: for Paul makes a distinction between the defilement or filthiness of the flesh and that of the spirit.—Titus i. 15, he says, “that both their mind and conscience is defiled,” in which state he denies that there is any thing clean to such characters. And this uncleanness or impurity, is ungodliness itself, a false opinion and a perverted judgment concerning God: that is, it is ‘an evil eye’ which maketh the whole body to be full of darkness, yea, even their most specious works, words, counsels, and thoughts,—such an universal effect has this evil of an unclean spirit.—The other uncleanness is that of the flesh, such as lust and pleasure, which, although it pollutes the heart and the will with unclean desires, is yet called the uncleanness of the flesh, because it proceeds from the lust of the flesh.

And to this two-fold uncleanness or defilement, there is opposed a two-fold cleanness or purity. The



Spirit is godliness itself, which Job and Baruch call "wisdom," and Paul and Peter, "faith." Thus Peter saith, Acts xv. "Purifying your hearts by faith:" for this faith it is that makes the mind and conscience pure, having right thoughts of God. Hence, there is in the prophets a frequent mention of fornication, by which they accuse the people of Israel as polluted, contaminated, spotted, corrupt, prostituted, and adulterous. And again, on the other hand, they call the people of a pure and sincere faith, "a virgin." So that chastity, and defiledness or spottedness, are the two emblems under which godliness and ungodliness are set forth.

The cleanness of the flesh is chastity itself or modesty, which is well known and continually spoken of: and it is faith that makes this also, as it is said Isaiah xi. 5, 'And faith shall be the girdle of his loins, and faith the girdle of his reins.' And this is called the purity of the flesh, because that which is in the things and works of the flesh enters into and rests in the spirit of the man. And the other is called the purity of the spirit, because that which is in the things and works of the spirit, goes forth and pours itself throughout the works, and purifies the whole life. And Paul has expressed these both together very beautifully, 1 Tim. ii. 2, "That we may live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty;" which in the Greek is *ευσεβια και σεμνοτητα*, whereby, we serve God and live honestly.

Behold therefore, he says nothing about faith, but commends the fruits of it. For no one can walk without spot but he that believeth: and therefore to walk without spot is to live in faith: and thus David begins from the first commandment.

"Worketh righteousness," Here righteousness is put alone without any pronoun: there is neither the pronoun *your* nor *my*. The righteousness of God, however, (as I have often shewn before,) is that righteousness whereby we are, through his grace, justified before him: concerning which David is not here speaking: but he is speaking of that righteousness whereby we live righteously among men, injuring no one, and giving to all

their own, as the Apostle saith, Titus ii. 12, "living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world."

But here observe, David saith, "that *worketh* righteousness:" not, that talks about, thinks about, or hears of, righteousness: because "not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law, shall be justified." What then do we owe unto others? That which Christ saith, Matt. vii. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them," even unto your enemies. That is, to injure no one, to return evil unto no one, to succour those that suffer injury, and to do good unto all men. But these things, I say, are spoken especially unto those who have respect of persons: as if he had said, It is not because thou art a priest, nor because thou art of a religious order, nor because thou prayest much, nor because thou doest miracles, nor because thou teachest excellently, nor because thou art dignified with the title of father, nor because thou art the doer of any work (except righteousness) that thou shalt rest in the holy hill of the Lord: for if thou be destitute of the work of righteousness, neither all thy good works, nor thy indulgences, nor thy votes and suffrages, nor thy intercessions, shall avail thee any thing. Therefore, the truth is firm, that is, the walker without spot, and the doer of righteousness that shall rest in the tabernacle of the Lord.

Yet how many are there, who build, increase, and adorn churches, monasteries, altars, vessels, garments, &c. who, all the while never so much as think of the works of righteousness, nay, who tread righteousness under foot that they may work these their own works, and because of them hope to gain the pardon of their unrighteousness, while thousands are deceived by these means. Hence, in the last day Christ will say, I was an hungered, I was thirsty, I was naked, I was in prison, I was a stranger. He will not say one word about those works which are done and admired at this day. And on the other hand, it is of no account against thee, that thou art a layman, or poor, or sick, or contemptible, or

how vile soever thou art ; if thou workest righteousness, thou shalt be saved. The only work that we must hope will be considered and accounted of, is the work of righteousness : all other works that either urge or allure us on under a show of godliness, are a thing of nought.

“ That speaketh the truth in his heart.” We have here a beautiful order of things. Here, first, a person is required that pleases God by cleanness or spotlessness, and then a work that pleases him by righteousness, and then a word that pleases him by truth. Thus God has respect unto Abel first, and then unto his offering. And he that is powerful, his work will be also powerful in word. And the tree that bringeth forth his fruit in due season, the leaf of that tree shall never wither. But let there be none who say and do not.

Ver. 3.—*He that hath not wrought deceit with his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour ; and hath not taken up a reproach against his neighbour.*

There is no doubt that what he said before,—the walker without spot and the worker of righteousness, signify the whole of justification ; which he more farther pursues in its different parts ; of which one is, to speak truth in the heart, not to flatter, not to connive, not to indulge ; which sins we commit in our conduct towards our friends and companions. Another part is, not ‘ to work craft by the tongue : ’ which is in the Hebrew, “ who has not detracted from, or defamed.” Hieronymus translated it ‘ Who is not easy or slippery in his tongue.’ It signifies that vice wherein we sin in our conduct towards our adversaries : taking to our friends whatever we may have heard from their enemies, and interpreting the whole in the worst sense, and daily striving to find out something of the same kind which we may take to them. It was from this verb that Joseph called his brethren, Gen. xlii. that they were spies to spy out in Egypt. And this is an evil that is very general and of great extent, and most powerful and effectual in exciting discords. And moreover, the person thus acting covers the whole over with the title and name of advice and

admonition. For it is a most striking outside show of things, when Satan transforms himself into an angel of light under the show of zeal for God, and thereby explores the life of a neighbour, and accuses him of heresy, error, and an ungodly life. For here he expects his reward for his service towards God, which he performed by killing the godly and condemning godly doctrines.

The prophet, therefore, here would have us say nothing to one neighbour that we have heard spoken evil by another neighbour, even though the one may be an enemy and the other a well-deserving friend, and that we never speak any thing but what is good, and those things only which tend to repair, preserve, and increase harmony and concord : for this is what we should wish every one to do unto us. Nay, we are to take the greatest care that we do not judge or condemn the word or work of any one, lest we should run against that truth for the promoting which we seem to be striving. It is this right way that Augustine has told us in his Confess. ix. that his mother acted towards the women who were her enemies. And therefore a principal part of righteousness consists in this.

There are many testimonies against this vice in the scriptures, which we omit, as it is a vice so well known of itself, and condemned even by the doctrines of men. But no one man is free from it in this life, so great is this life's misery. For although there are none who require that the evil sayings of their enemies should be told them, and that the whole should be interpreted in the worst way, yet when they are thus told and interpreted they do not hear them and permit them to be told unwilling, nor do they repel nor reject the person who tells them, nor do they themselves interpret them in the best way, nor shut the door against suspicion. Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, as mentioned Jeremiah xl. 14, is said to have been eminent in this virtue ; for he, when Johanan the son of Kareah told him, and told him truly, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah lay in wait to slay him, would not believe him, saying, "Thou speakest falsely of Ishmael." And he persevered in this

false opinion of him and was killed : thus he had rather stake his life than have an evil suspicion concerning his neighbour or believe an informer.

“ And hath not done evil to his neighbour : ” or hath not done damage or harm : from which evil, if you take it in its fullest latitude, there is no one of men free, even as there was no one free from the former evil spoken of. For although there be many who would not raise their hand ; yet, according to the peripatetic virtue, revenge, they will allow evil to be done to the evil, and will not prevent it ; though they will not consider how they would like the same things to be done to them by an adversary. And this law of nature, doing to all as you would have them do unto you, Aristotle, that great light of nature, did not see, when he polluted his Ethics by this law of revenge, and many other evils of the same kind, making them so many virtues.

And this enormity also not unfrequently puts on the garb of an angel of light : so that it is imperceptible while it burns and kills the saints of God, and persecutes truth and righteousness, considering that it thereby does God service, and shews a zeal for the truth ; just as at this day the sophists and popes rage, those idols, not at all considering that they would not like the same things to be done unto them. Thus you observe, that David inveighs much against all respect of persons : and especially, because such presume most especially to dwell in the tabernacle of the Lord, who are the most polluted with these vices and evils, under the false appearance of a good intention, and to obtain a good name and appearance in the sight of themselves and men.

“ And hath not taken up a reproach against his neighbour.” The verb “ taken up ” would better be rendered “ lifted up,” as in Psalm xxiv. 4, “ who hath not taken up (has not lifted up, or exalted, or boasted,) his soul in vanity.” So also, it is here, who has not boasted of, exalted, exaggerated, magnified, extended an evil name, reproach, shame, or blasphemy against his neighbour ; which enemies are wont to do to each other ; and espe-

cially those against whom the Psalmist more especially speaks, who carry a show of zeal for the truth and love for God. David is here speaking in the Spirit : for those open committers of this sin will openly acknowledge that they have done wrong : but these go on in their merits and their zeal, and if you do not affirm that they have acted rightly, they immediately consider you a heretic. And therefore it is the way of these to cry out against their neighbour, to call them heretics, schismatics, erroneous, and a hundred other opprobrious names, and to spread them abroad among the people, to lift them up, to magnify them before the great ones, and to attest them with their hands, their voice, and their whole body ; until, if possible, they have confounded heaven and earth, and the depths of the sea, and made all things confusion.

But behold, the Spirit does not omit to call them their neighbours, though they are the most hostilely opposed to each other : thus by a most powerful appellation inviting them to peace and concord, and striking at their extreme madness. For who would defame, injure, and detract from his neighbour by abuses, but a madman ? And how shall they excuse themselves by saying that they have only done to their *enemies* what they deserved, when the Holy Spirit calls them and affirms them to be their neighbours ? for by so doing they act in opposition to the Holy Spirit.

And observe also the beautiful order : for the whole of this verse is respecting enemies. We have, first of all, exploring, carrying about, and attacking the evils of our neighbour. Then we have hurting, killing, and burning the person accused and attacked. And lastly, we have blaspheming, raising reproach, and heightening crimes ; in order to shew that the punishment inflicted was deserved, that they might not appear to have acted unjustly. Thus, against Christ they first sought false witnesses, they alleged things against him and accused him, they then condemned him when accused and crucified him, and when they had crucified him, they blas-

phemed him with the most opprobrious names. So properly, aptly, and briefly has David described the life of the ungodly.

But, on the contrary, it is the part of a good man not to admit an opprobrium against his neighbour, but to do away with it, to exclaim against it, to defend him, and, if he cannot defend him, to excuse him, or at least grieve and condole with him, even though he be an evil man and an enemy; for it is thus that every man would be done unto himself. Hence the good man will not only, not injure or do evil to his neighbour, but will even do good unto him though he be an enemy: and this is the commandment of Christ, Matt. vi. He will not search out his faults and then carry them about, but will resist him that does so, and will stop the whisperer. These things are high and difficult: because in doing these things you must offend against the mountains of Israel and against the pride of Jordan, the highest bishops, powerful magistrates, and the wise and the holy ones. For these are entangled in these sins far more deeply than the common people, and rage and injure to a far greater extent, because they carry with them the appearance of doing right, and an authority which excites fear. And this is what David now saith.

*Ver. 4.—In whose eyes a malignant person is brought to nothing; but he maketh much of them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth unto his neighbour and deceiveth him not.*

He would have said, the highest priest, king, prophet, the rulers, seniors, scribes, pharisees, bishops, and every thing that is of great name in his sight; unless there be a distinction made between the person and the vices, and between the power and the abuse of the power. For, the names of powers are to be feared, but their vices are to be contemned; nor are we to connive at or approve the vices because of the powers; nor is the power to be offended or despised because of the vices, for there is no power but of God, for they are not of men but of God, Rom. xiii.; but the vices are not of

God but of men. There is need of wisdom here, therefore, and also of a great mind, that the power frighten not him that despises the vices, and that the vices subvert not him that suspects the power.

The meaning is, therefore, although informers, malefactors, and blasphemers are great, and although iniquity comes forth from the elders in Babylon, who seem to rule the people, the good man is not frightened at the magnitude of the persons, he despises them as malignant, and acts confidently, defending his neighbours though he fears them as superiors, humbly believing in their power. If Christians observed this verse in their conduct towards the great ones of the church of Rome, there would be fewer evils in the church at this day than there now are.

The Hebrew saith with more elegance in this place, "In his eyes the contemner is contemned," thereby shewing the mind and nature of the great ones and the proud, who being inflated with a confidence in their own power, and with the appearance of their person, wish to be feared by all. Though they themselves desire to despise all, to have all things lawful to themselves, and no one to say any thing against them; as the idols of Rome think and say of us Germans. 'How many stable cleaners have we Roman-churchmen.' And again, 'A German beast!' For it is thus that those most holy pastors of the sheep of Christ feed us for gowns and for the whole of our substance, which those most lusty robbers tear away from us. Are they not then most boasting and secure despisers of God and of all men? But who is there to be found that despises them in return? Do their flatterers despise them? No! all they do, is, to assert their injured authority (as they consider it); whereas it is only their vices that are reproved, by which they make their power, which should be a help unto eternal salvation, the encouragement of iniquity and murders, and the gulph of perdition.

But again, on the contrary, "And make much of them that fear the Lord." A beautiful contrariety this. The former are the despisers of God, but these the



fearers of God : they despise the one but make much of the other. But are they not moved at the poverty, the paucity, the humility, the unpolishedness, the meanness, and the oppression of these poor characters? No! they are like Moses, Heb. xi. 25, 26, who left Egypt, not fearing the displeasure of Pharaoh; "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." And so also Ahimelech, not at all fearing Saul and his priests, spoke with confidence for David, 1 Sam. xxii. 14.

And there is a peculiar force in this: that by a mutual exchange of feelings, here is respect and esteem shewn to the poor and the contemptible, and contempt to the great and the glorious. They do not only not honour the great ones in their vices, who are despisers of the poor, but even contemn them. And they do not only respect the poor who are despised, and esteem them in their excellences, but honour and make much of them. But all human and worldly feeling acts quite the contrary to this: they proclaim forth the vices of these great ones for the greatest virtues, or interpret them in the most favourable way. On the other hand, they accuse the virtues of these poor ones as the greatest vices, or interpret the whole in the most unfavourable way: as it is most beautifully painted forth in the fable of The Fox and the Lion, and also of The Wolf and the Sheep. Therefore, it is a most courageous work of a most bold spirit to despise the honoured, and honour the despised. Thus Elisha fearlessly said unto Jehoram the king of Israel, 2 Kings iii. 13 and 14, "What have I to do with thee?—As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee."

*He that sweareth unto his neighbour.*

Hieronymus renders it, 'who swears so as to afflict himself and changeth not.' For the Hebrew word, as it

bears both significations, 'affliction,' or 'friend,' may be rendered by the signification of affliction. But the rendering of our translation is the more to be preferred, as the Psalm speaks of works towards our neighbour throughout, excepting the second verse, which has spoken very particularly about the purifying of the man himself.

David, however, here touches upon a vice common among men, and concerning which all complain; that is, unbelief; which springs from that root which seeks every thing that is its own, and especially in all affairs of trade and business, without which this life cannot consist. For as the desire of self-gain is rooted within, which no one truly discovers in himself, as it is most deep and subtle: so it is difficult and rare to keep one's promise and oath, and not to change it. And even if there be those that keep it, they do not always do it with a willing mind, especially when there is any one who laughs at the circumstance which may have taken place, which turns to his gain and advantage, which often excites in us a repentance for what we have promised. But supposing he overcomes this, (which no one can do without the grace of God,) yet there are few who overcome it even under present grace, when they are induced to swear any thing as it were by compulsion, or to preserve their oath to a man who is become their enemy since it was taken. And therefore there is no son of Adam who fulfils this precept; nay, even a son of God scarcely fulfils it, he only as it were begins to fulfil it. And therefore no one of the former dwells in the tabernacle of the Lord, and indeed the latter scarcely dwells there; and as Peter saith, 'the righteous scarcely is saved.'

Therefore, let every one take heed of ridiculous, yea, impious and heretical decretals concerning vows and the redemption of vows; where the Roman Pontiff, or rather some one of his ignorant scribes, dares to declare, that it is in his power to dispense and change vows and oaths, or, (as some more mildly declare,) to distinguish and determine what are vows and what are not; saying, contrary to the express scripture, Deut. xxiii. that he is

not a breaker of his vow who omits to perform it at the command of the Roman Pontiff. But such a fellow is not a pastor, but a destroyer of the sheep of Christ; bringing in a cover for his iniquity, or as a foundation for his assertion, that of Exod. xiii. and xiv. where it is written 'that the firstling of an ass is to be slain or redeemed by a sheep:' not contented with knowing, that that scripture has no reference whatever to an oath or a promise. And moreover, that exchange was not by the will of man but by the command of God. Thus does that tyrant corrupt the Word of God to establish his own tyranny: and yet, he here boasts with swollen cheeks, that he thus stops the mouth of them that speak evil, and glories in so doing with all confidence: shewing men, that in this matter he is as God in the temple of God, and having the same power that he reads God has, nay, even daring to dissolve what God has decreed. But if a decree or declaration of this kind is sought, it is not power but knowledge that is to decide whether it be a vow or not: and therefore, any one good yet simple man will more properly and rightly settle this point than the mighty, all-grasping, all-decreeing apostolic seat at Rome, which is for the most part ignorant in knowledge and in the holy scriptures.

As, therefore, in this place the prophet requires oaths and vows to be performed by all men as necessary unto salvation, much less can any one dissolve those vows or oaths which are made unto God. Whence, Joshua ix. we have it written, that when the children of Israel swore unto the Gibeonites under a deception, and afterwards repented of their oath when the deceit practised upon them was discovered, they yet performed their oath. On the other hand, Zedekiah is rebuked by the prophets, and especially by Ezekiel, because he did not keep his oath to the king of Babylon; and he was for that afterwards taken prisoner, had his eyes put out, and was miserably punished. And this also happened to the former king of Hungary, who broke his treaty with the Turks, at the command of the apostolic legate. And yet, all these examples do not prevent this heretical

opinion concerning vows and oaths; these heretics and searchers after depravity here willingly sleep.

But I believe that all those precepts which are here given concerning the keeping of an oath, apply equally to every promise. For the mind of David is to teach the keeping and preserving of faith among men: not that faith, I say, whereby we believe in God, but that by which men are made faithful and tenacious of their promise, in the same way as the faithfulness of God is spoken of, Rom. iii. "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" And which the Apostle has spoken of again, 2 Tim. iii. thus, "If we believe not, yet he remaineth faithful." So that we ought to be as the sons of God, and like unto God; faithful to those who trust in us, even as God is faithful to all that trust in him.

But David dwells more expressly upon an oath, because in this kind of work faith is more especially and manifestly kept and broken; even as chastity is taught in the prohibition of adultery, and kindness in the prohibition of murder, &c. But in all these the grace of God is commended; for it is not in human power, but belonging to the divine only, to abstain from perjury, even as it is also to abstain from adultery and from murder. For David has here a respect to the common life of man, which Hosea describes thus, chap. iv. "Because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." And who at this day can say that he is safe from perjury, when every one is bound by so many oaths; first, to the ecclesiastics, and then to the civil magistrates? For who is there that has not been bound to some one, excepting it be the infants in the cradle? And who has fulfilled all his oaths? Hence, it comes to pass, that, from the cloud of oaths that are taken, perjuries abound, and, as it were, overflow in the church, and the multitude of laws is the cause of numerous sins. There is no one therefore who does not stand bound by an oath: there is no one, or at least a very

few, who do not repent that they have bound themselves by oath, or who fulfil their oaths willingly. Hence this life involves us miserable sinners in sins on every side.

But here an inquiry is started,—whether or not it is lawful for a Christian man to swear? for Christ teaches us, Matt. v. saying, “But I say unto you, Swear not at all.” Many and huge volumes have been written upon this subject, with a great degree of peril, and with very little satisfactory definition and conclusion: when we all the while are involved in and led captive by oaths, and the common life of men has the custom of swearing so common, that there is nothing so much in habit, and yet none are settled upon the real meaning and nature of an oath. This verse certainly implies that it is lawful to swear even to a friend or a neighbour, so that no one is to think that it is a superior only that is to have an oath sworn to him. Moreover, David is not speaking of false oaths or of perjury only, that is, that wherein a man knowingly forswears himself, but rather concerning the fulfilment of an oath; which the Hebrew expresses much more clearly than our translator. For, in the Hebrew, it is “changeth not,” instead of deceiveth not; that is, faileth not, draweth not back; that is, doth not break the promise that he hath made. While therefore the words of Christ are so plain in prohibiting an oath, where he says, “Let your conversation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil:” so, it is equally plain that Christ himself frequently swore in the Gospels, where he says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” And Paul also often swears who never prohibited swearing, and he every where commands faith and truth. I know not therefore what to say, nor where to lean for a certainty.

I would, however, shew my poor opinion in my trifling way, which, nevertheless, I believe is not very wide from the common opinion of all. I will look first at the common sense and life of men; and then at the words of Christ, and take them in their most simple meaning and design.

The sense of all is, that many things are condemned

which yet are not wholly omitted, as the conscience of every one will testify. So also, God condemns those who swear habitually in common language and conversation; which, nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid, as experience shews. But out of conversation, where there are treaties and compacts, and where an oath is required, no one condemns an oath. So that a distinction is to be made between common conversation, relation of things and talking, where many and various things are described, related, and said, and treaties, compacts, promises, agreements, and the like.

And so also Christ and Paul swear as often as they persuade and enforce unto faith, and covenant with men in the sacred compact of faith. But Christ in his prohibition speaks of common conversation. And hence, he significantly saith, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay:" that he may prohibit the levity of swearing, as there is no necessity for it in common conversation. And this, I think, is how Augustine understood the words, when he says that it is the proneness to, and habit of swearing that are prohibited. So that the words of Christ in their most simple meaning stand true, "for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil." And here we are not necessitated to suppose that this "evil" has reference to the person who does not believe the oath; for it refers to, and truly is committed by, him who is in the habit of swearing in all common conversation, where there is no promise made, no treaty, no agreement, and so, no necessity for swearing at all.

By this way of interpreting the nature and meaning of an oath, we shall ensnare a far less number of consciences. And this meaning, as I have said, expresses the life or common sense of men from which the doctrine of Christ does not much differ; and it also harmonizes with the Word of Christ simply understood, and does not at all wander from the original design intended in the words of Christ. For it is said, Levit. xix. "Ye shall not lie: nor shall ye deceive any one his neighbour. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the

Lord." Where he speaks of common and familiar conversation, as it appears; while he speaks of lies and false conversation; which are less sins of common conversation, than perjury and perfidy in agreements and contracts.

But this verse of the Psalm does not shew that David is speaking of common conversation, when he says, "And changeth not," he manifestly attacks perfidy and perjury, because he had attacked lies, false-speaking, and perjury, in daily conversation above, "who speaketh the truth in his heart." And concerning this same oath, Psalm xxiv. he speaks thus, "Who hath not sworn to his neighbour deceitfully."—Hence, both these acceptations and truths stand good. That a Christian is plainly commanded, by no means to swear either by any thing human or any thing divine, in common conversation: and yet, an oath is to be kept that is taken and received in any agreement or compact. Therefore, an oath is something like unto a work of the flesh, which out of matrimony is not lawful, but within matrimony is mutually enjoyed: and so, in the same way, out of an agreement or compact of faith it is not lawful to swear, but within such a compact it is lawful, yea, is expedient.

*Ver. 5.—He that hath not put out his money on usury, nor taken a reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

This verse does not need an exposition, but a fulfilment. And Augustine saith, that these are not great things, and things with which holy men begin as being the most important, because the prophet began with more important and greater things at the first. And Hieronymus thinks the same, and others also. But if we do but bear in our mind that the prophet speaks in the Spirit, what man is there who is not involved in these sins? For be it so that all do not lend upon usury, yet all hate the prohibition, and are sorry that it is not lawful for them to put out their money on usury; and they would that it were lawful, looking only at their own profit, and not at the benefit of others. And even if the

iniquity of the old Adam should cover himself here, yet, if want should press upon him, and no other way of supplying it lay open, there is no one who would not become an usurer.

Wherefore, all the words of this Psalm, 'shall dwell,' 'shall rest,' 'who walks,' 'who works,' 'who speaks,' 'who does not act deceitfully,' 'who has not done evil,' 'has not taken up a reproach,' 'has not sworn,' 'has not changed,' 'has not given,' 'has not received,' and 'doeth,' are so to be received concerning works, that all are to be understood as flowing from a spiritual will. For hypocrites can frequently do many, nay, even all these works, for a time, but in the time of adversity, when things go against them, they do just the contrary. Were it not so, it would be but a very trifling work not to put out our money on usury, when we are commanded moreover to do good to our enemies, and to lend unto all freely.

But does not the prophet contradict Moses who says to the children of Israel, Deut. xxiii. 19, 20, "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury?"—There is no doubt that Moses is here attacking the vices of his nation, because, not being content with putting their money out on usury unto strangers, they did it even unto their brethren: for that people ever was, and still is, the most avaricious and most addicted to usury, of all the nations under heaven, against whom the prophets have variously inveighed: among whom, Amos viii. 4, 5, 6, "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" And the same prophet saith, chap. ii. 6, 7, "Because they sold the righteous for



silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes ; that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek.”

But however, the Psalmist does not only this, (as I said,) but proposes to lay the axe at the root of all the effects of usury, even the most secret effects. And in the place of usury, he sets before us beneficence ; shewing, that (as the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi.) we should ‘ do good and be ready to distribute : ’ as Christ teaches, Luke vi. and Matt. v. But, in our day, the most happy usury is continually practised, the Roman Pontiff himself being the author, under the name of justice and ‘ a lawful contract ; ’ for they take away the name usury and give it a new appellation, calling it the ‘ contract of re-buying.’ It therefore now bears a very fair appearance. And it is by this kind of righteousness at this day that the whole world is justified, and especially the clerical order, and this monster reigns in security, while the Gospel is by this means extinguished throughout the whole world, and the whole of its righteousness, together with the kingdom of God, and yet after all this no one will believe that Antichrist reigns.

*And hath not taken a reward against the innocent.*

And this again is not a great work, though it is a very great work in the present day, and very rarely to be found ; to say nothing about the Jews. In this matter judges sin, and those who have to decide causes, and to defend and attack them : that is, the Pope, and his bishops, officials, procurators, and forensic pettifoggers, and all those dregs of men who live upon the sins of the people, as pimps do upon the prostitutions of women. It is perhaps easy to consult for any one immediately upon the first sight of his cause, and give and pronounce sentence. But, when corrupt desires enter in, such as the hope of gain, the favour of a friend, the hatred of a friend, the contempt of the humble, and the fear of the great, you will see that of Deut. xvi. and Exod. xxiii. fulfilled, “ The gift blindeth the wise and perverteth the words of the righteous.” And Isaiah i. 23, “ Every

one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards :” but this also all the other evil affections above-mentioned will do : no one, however, knows how ensnaring and powerful an evil this is, but he who has been tempted and tried in it.

But there are now others also who will pervert the cause of a man from the desire of glory and honour, in order that they may appear to be more wise and learned. What does it matter, therefore, though thou mayest not receive a gift against the innocent, while thou receivest glory, or revenge, or favour? If rulers and bishops preserved this verse in their conduct, think ye that the Roman madness, (*furia*,) I mean to say senate, (*curia*,) would produce such enormities as they now do? But as all iniquities have arisen there, and reign there at their full height, it must be that this iniquity must reign there also : that Satan may in all things there hold his throne, and may from thence send forth every evil through the whole world.

Rightly, therefore, does David conclude, “ He that doeth these things shall never be moved.” But mark what he saith, “ He that *doeth*.” If then he shall not stand who only talks of these things, and shews them forth, but does them not, where shall all those appear who, though they think and know these things to be right, do not dare to mutter one word about them? And where shall they appear also who with mistaken zeal act against these things? Hence, in the Hebrew the punctuation of the verse is so arranged that “ He that doeth these things,” refers to the former part of the Psalm, “ Hath not given his money upon usury, nor taken a reward against the innocent”—he it is that “ shall not be moved for ever.” As if he had said, ‘ Not he that knoweth or talketh about these things.’ So that the last part of this verse has reference to the whole Psalm : and the former part of it shews how rare and arduous a thing it is to live without usury and without the price of blood : nay, that it is impossible, unless any one be ready to lay aside all gain, honour, and even life, and to suffer all things for the truth.

From which things, we see how deceitful all things are that shine with an external name and appearance. For we are apt to conclude that all christianity at this day is with the clergy: and yet, behold, all of them throughout the world live in usury, in the price of blood, and in the fear of the Roman Pontiff. It is boasted of every where with all the contentious pride of Rome, that the Pope feeds all the sheep, but behold, he is the wolf that devours all the sheep. Behold the fulfilment of what the Apostle declared, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." And yet, we still go on reading our canonically prescribed prayers, we sacrifice many masses, and do and say many things which cannot be said and done without our great peril. Let faith and truth therefore look at their peril! And what is to be said unto us, who instead of being Christians are become Romanists, workers instead of believers, decretalists instead of evangelists, ceremonialists instead of spiritualists; and, in a word, slaves of the most impious of men, instead of the all-free people of God!

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## PSALM XVI.

MICHTHAM OF DAVID.

This noun, 'Michtham,' has been variously handled. This titular inscription, according to Augustine, is of an antiquated nature; because the same Hebrew word *CHETEM* signifies also 'a mark or sign;' and he says, that thence, 'Michtham' signifies 'marked' or 'noted,' and 'written without a title;' and that this title refers to the subject of the cross. But this, although a pious interpretation, is yet far-fetched. Hieronymus deriving the etymology of the title from two words, renders it 'of the humble and

simple David.' Lyra, from an opinion of his own, makes it to be the name signifying 'a peculiarly beautiful song:' whose opinion pleases me better than any other that I have seen. For Burgensis learnedly reprobates the opinion of Hieronymus. Burgensis however himself considers that by this term 'Michtham' is signified 'gold' or 'golden.' Because it is written, Song v. 11, "His head is as the most fine gold:" and by prefixing the letter *Mem* the word 'Michtham' is formed; that is, 'of gold,' or 'golden.' And he says that by this title is signified the passion of Christ; which is the subject of the Psalm.

Assisted, therefore, by all these opinions, I shall be led to consider that 'Michtham' is the name of this Psalm. It is a general way to name the Psalm from the author of it: hence we have 'A song of David,' 'A psalm of David,' 'The testimony of Asaph,' 'The understanding (or experience) of David,' and so on, as we have seen hitherto, and as we shall yet see. And so also here, as this Psalm is upon a very remarkable and particular subject, namely, treating of Christ the head of all, David did not wish to give it any common title, but desired that it should be marked and signalized by some particular, new, and sweet inscription, 'Michtham David.' As if he had said, 'The little golden song of David.' And thus Lyra and Burgensis come into one and the same understanding and acceptation of the title, which they have both derived from the Hebrew fountain.

There are however six Psalms upon the whole which bear this title, this 16th, the 56th, and the four Psalms following the 56th. But the others have many things beside in their titles; this Psalm in particular has the signal inscription, 'Michtham David' only. Indeed there is no other that speaks so clearly of the personal passion of Christ and his personal resurrection. And hence, the apostles have adduced this Psalm especially more than any of the others, in support of their doctrines upon those heads to confirm the resurrection of Christ: as we read, Acts ii. and xiii. where Peter says, chap. ii. 24—28, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the

pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face ; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad ; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope : because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shall make me full of joy with thy countenance.”

From these things the meaning and design of the whole Psalm are manifest, nor does it want any interpretation of ours, as far as the scope and intent of it are concerned, but it requires rather faith and imitation in us : for it is a Psalm that the apostles have interpreted under the influence of the Holy Spirit : and yet it is full of very obscure words. It is in this Psalm that that article of our faith, ‘ He descended into hell : the third day he rose again from the dead,’ is founded.’ So that it is wonderful that many theologians of great name formerly denied that that article was to be found in the holy scriptures ; that is, the latter part of it, the descent into hell.

Ver. 1.—*Preserve me, O Lord: for in thee do I put my trust.*

This is the latter part of the verse in the Hebrew : for the former part consists of the title. They are the words of Christ throughout the whole Psalm. He begins with the feelings of one perishing, deserted by all, and dying. In this manner,—‘ Behold, I am dying : my strength has all left me ; angels and men have all forsaken me : nay, even devils and all men conspire to destroy me. Refuge has failed, and no man careth for my soul. I am in despair and bereft of all things. Therefore, do thou who alone art my Saviour, who preservest the lost, revivest the dead, liftest up the afflicted, preserve me.’ As if he had said, ‘ Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.” But he does not pray to be pre-

served for the time of his passion only: he confesses that it is upon God his Saviour alone that he depended throughout his whole life, and that he died daily, as Paul confesses and glories of himself: and thus also does the godly man die daily, and thus is he preserved daily. And this is the new life of faith and of hope, which is commended unto us in this Psalm; that is, the life of the cross; that is, of death, and that the most ignominious.

Can he therefore who lives in peace and quiet, or who preserves himself by his own strength or the strength of man,—can such an one say unto God, “Preserve me; O Lord.” For it will be answered to such an one, what shall I preserve thee from? for thou art not yet perishing nor lost. Let us learn therefore, that it is then especially that we cry unto God, when we are perishing: but it is here that men for the most part cry not unto God, but rather despair and perish.

*For in thee do I put my trust.*

Thus, behold, it is faith and hope that cry: for how shall any one cry who does not believe and has no trust or confidence in God? Therefore, it is faith that stands here in the place of *merit of congruity*, and *merit of condignity*, deserving eternal salvation. For why does he not bring forward his works and virtues for merits? Because, in this excess of feeling, nothing stands, nothing keeps a man but a pure and steady faith resting in the mercy of God, which presumes upon nothing itself, but expects all things from God: as Christ here shews by his own most beautiful example: concerning which feeling and force of the words “I have trusted,” and “in thee,” we have spoken at full, Psalm v. For if we hope in any thing else except in God, we cannot say, For I have trusted in thee. Who then shall presume upon his merits when Christ here, the head of all, says nothing at all about merits, and rests in the mercy of God alone by faith and hope. The feelings therefore here described, apply to all who are brought to despair in all things and of all things.

Ver. 2.—*I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God: thou wantest not my goodness.*

Hieronymus renders the latter part of the verse thus : “ It is not well with me without thee.” But I should rather render it thus, ‘ I have not been good unto thee.’ So that I would make *TOBATHI* a verb standing absolutely, which, (if we might use such a word,) might be rendered by *bonavi*: ‘ *I have done good,*’ that is, I have been good and fair: so that the sense would be, I therefore spoke unto the Lord that he might be my God, from whom I might have all things, while from me he could have nothing, (for this is to be truly God unto us,) because I have never been good unto him, I have never conferred any benefit upon him, “ For who has first given unto him, and it shall be restored him again?” Rom xi. ‘ For from him, and through him, and in him, are all things.’ And this is the sense that our translator has in his mind, when he said, ‘ Thou wantest not my goodness.’ And the acceptation of Hieronymous accords with this also,—that we not only cannot give any thing unto God, but receive all good things from him, and without him have nothing good.

And Christ says these things in commendation of the cross, looking at the two contrary generations of men: of which the one, that is the godly, he saw to be born of him and to be prepared for him as his kingdom and inheritance: but the other, that is the ungodly, because they were offended at the cross, were to be left. As if he had said, I am now dying, and, in the eyes of men, nothing appears less probable than that I please thee, or that I am thy King and thy heir. But this they do, because, trusting to their own things, virtues, strength, and merits, they do not choose thee for their God, nor consider that they receive all good things from thee, but presume that they do good unto thee. Thus presumptuously boasting, that they give that unto thee which they ought to receive. Whereas, thou now takest away all things from me, that thou mayest shew that thou receivest nothing from us, but that we receive all things

from thee, when we hope in thee, and put ourselves entirely into thy hand.

Here, therefore, the head and leader of this new people teaches us by his own example, and openly declares unto us with what good things it is that this new people shall abound, that is, with divine good things only, all others being brought to nought in us. And this is what the Jews and the old people who were accustomed to the promises of temporal abundance could not receive, and indeed nature herself very unwillingly receives it, nay, cannot receive it in any way. Whereas, there is no one who does not prate that the Lord is his God : but when he begins to shew them that he alone is their good, and to take away all things from them, they then find that they knew nothing at all about him. For they cannot endure the being stripped of all their wealth, name, life, righteousness, and all those things which they possess, so as to be brought to cry out in faith and hope only, " Preserve me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in thee." And, " I said unto the Lord, thou art my God : I bring nothing of goodness unto thee." It is the benefit of the cross that brings a man to this, which mortifies us and all that belongs to us, that we might be partakers of the divine nature, as it is said, 2 Pet. i.

And indeed it is a very arduous matter, nay, hell itself, to be brought to feel that all our goodness is in God, and that there is nothing of it in ourselves whereby we gain over God unto us, or appease him, or mitigate his wrath. Here all that impious theology falls to the ground, of those who presume that they can by doing all that is in their power purchase the mercy of God, and can make satisfaction for their sins by their own works : being totally ignorant that all these things are done by faith alone in the mercy of God, after all their own works are destroyed and done away with, and they brought to despair of them, whereby they once strived to atone for their sins and to deserve the mercy of God.

—And here it will appear, how much profit all that pomp of satisfactions and indulgences are of, which has been introduced by our heretical teachers into the



church of God, by their impious statutes, decisions, reservations, grants, concessions, and all that pestilential trash which has most destructively entrapped and ensnared the souls of almost the whole world. By all which things what else have we learned, than to believe, that God wants our good works, and that we do not want to be made partakers of the divine nature, but that God will be rendered happy by being made partaker of our nature? Whereby, we are not brought to be transformed into his image by faith that he may be our God, but endeavour to change and bring him over to us by our works, and to make him like unto us, that we may be his idols: as he saith, Isaiah lxvi. ‘Unto what will ye liken me? or what image will ye make of me?’ And is not this to wish to make God like unto myself, if I endeavour to make him attemper and bend himself to my opinion, my feelings, my sense, and my desire? and to say within myself, that if he does not this I will not trust in him, and will not fall into his hand. Whereas we ought to be brought to nothing, and to acknowledge him to be able to maintain his own mind, his own will, and his own desire; that is, we ought to die, to be condemned, and to be brought to nothing.

Rightly, therefore, is the title ‘golden’ given to this Psalm, seeing that it treats of this highest and principal of all feelings and experiences, and concerning the best and highest nature of it, as it was exemplified in Christ the head of all. For it is by this experience that the people of Christ are distinguished from those who are not his people; all names and respect of persons being laid aside.

*To the saints who are in his earth, he hath magnified all my will in them.*

Hieronymus renders it ‘To the saints that are in the earth and the great, (or magnificent)’. The Hebrew runs, literally, in this way, ‘To the saints that are in the earth to him, and to the magnificent, all my desire is in them,’ therefore the pronouns *his (ejus)*, and *in them (eis)* which latter pronoun, according to the Hebrew idiom,

is wont to be subjoined to the relative *who* (*qui*). And it is certain that the verb 'hath magnified,' is by our translator put for a noun, ADIRI, which in the Hebrew signifies magnificent, great, admirable: as in Psalm viii. "How admirable is thy name in all the earth?" And the Hebrew omits the conjunction *and*, which might easily have prevented our translator from making a verb 'hath magnified,' out of the noun adjective admirable.

Let the sense of the verse be, then, without any Hebraism, "To the saints, which are in the earth, and the wonderful, is all my delight." So that the meaning is, As all are offended at me who are caught with the respect and estimation of persons, and are enemies to the cross, so, I leave them all of whatsoever kind and name they are; nor am I at all moved at their being the seed of Abraham, but I embrace and cleave unto them who are saints and magnificent in spirit, and who are despised by the world:—in these is all my will, my desire, and my inheritance: these are the people who are given me of my Father, in what part soever of the world they may be. For such are not necessarily at Jerusalem, nor in Zion, nor in Rome; but, as Peter saith, Acts x. 34, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." But this the Jews will not have to be the case, nor will their imitators, the Romanists, at this day have it to be so, who wish to bind us to Rome, and have much prevailed therein.—That this is the sense of the passage what follows will evince.

Christ says, therefore, If it becomes me who am the head of all, to despise all things and cleave unto God alone, and thus through suffering to enter into my kingdom; it will also become that people who are given to me for my inheritance to be such, that they shall depend on no place, no birth, no name, but this one thing,—that they hold and have the same one God with me, and that they offer to give nothing unto him, but receive all things from him, who brings to nothing that he might himself become all things. And this is what

Christ saith, Matt. xxiv. "If they shall say unto you, Behold, here is Christ; or lo, he is there; believe them not." For a Christian man knows no place, nor any temporal thing. Though all our impious Roman popes at this day, with all their flatterers, have condemned this sentiment as heretical, and have assigned unto us Rome as the place where alone we can find Christ; forming out to themselves a God according to their foolish vows and wishes. But Christ himself here not only beautifully teaches the contrary, but shews by a matter of fact, while he permits nothing to reign at Rome but Satan himself under his name; and that, every one can feel, and the whole world can see.

We have said in some of our former observations, that that is holy which is 'in secret,' 'hidden,' and in the sight of God only: which is far different from that profane holiness with which, at this day, only the house, the garments, and the clergy, are called holy by the popes, which is all to deceive men. That is holiness which the Holy Spirit makes holy by his unction. Hence, the saints are not Jews, nor the clergy, nor men of any particular name; but those only who cleave unto God by faith, and by it become partakers of the divine nature; the life of whom is hid with Christ in God: to all others Christ gives a writing of divorcement in this and the following verses, where he says, "My will, or desire, (*voluntas*) is to the saints of the earth and the magnificent." As if he had said in the words of Psalm ci. 6, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me." With which words of divorcement he says to the Jews, Malachi i. 'My delight is not in you, saith the Lord of hosts, for my name is great among the gentiles.'

"Will" (*voluntas*) or 'delight,' is the same in this verse as that which we find, Psalm i. "But his will (or delight) is in the law of the Lord." And it is in the Spirit that he calls them "magnificent," because, before men they are numbered among the wicked, the men of shame, and men of infirmity, as Christ their head was. But it is in faith that they are sanctified, and it is in faith

that they are great, and they are admirable in the eyes of God, for, with a great mind they despise all things here below, both good and evil.

And he saith "to the saints that are in the earth," not to those who are in heaven; so that he intimates thereby, that it is of the men in the earth, that he is speaking. And he speaks thus also that he might strengthen by a certain promise them that believe in him, that what evils soever they may endure they may yet know, that they please Christ their Lord, but that their enemies displease him. This verse, therefore, is a word of most sweet promise, which begets and preserves faith: even as the following is a word of severe threatening, condemning infidelity.

And this translation "all my *will* (*voluntas*) is in the saints," may be very easily harmonized with the whole, thus.—My God has wrought all things in my saints which I wished, and which I desire. I wished for nothing else than that they might be like me, and might be mortified with me according to the flesh, and be quickened in the Spirit. And this is wonderful and admirable in the eyes of all,—that those who are considered dead should live, that those who are lost in ignominy should be glorified, and that those who are considered profane should be called saints. But by the Spirit has my God fulfilled and accomplished all these my wonderful "wills." And therefore, my "will" is in these saints only, and not in others: for where all my wills are *said* to be, there, nothing at all of my will is found. Hence it comes to pass, that he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned: because all the will of Christ is in the former characters, and none of it in the latter.

Ver. 4.—*Their infirmities are multiplied; afterwards they hastened: I will not gather together their assemblies of blood: nor will I be mindful of their names through my lips.*

In this verse he describes another generation that are enemies to the cross, and rejects them: in whom

there is nothing of his will, for they will not receive him on account of the humility of his death, nor suffer themselves to be transformed unto God by faith that they may have with Christ the Lord for their God; but they will weary themselves with the idols of their heart and with their own works.—Hence the Hebrew words must be considered, because no Latin expressions can convey their full meaning. And Hieronymus thus varies in his translation from our translator, ‘Their idols shall be multiplied behind the backs of those who follow. I will not take their offerings of blood, nor will I take their names into my lips.’ We, however, have divided this verse into two. And what Hieronymus has rendered ‘their idols,’ we have rendered “their infirmities.” The Hebrew word is AZEBOTHAM: and the verb AZAB signifies to make or form any thing with sorrow and labour, as silversmiths labour to form out their devices. Hence, Psalm cxv. the idols of the gentiles are called AZABIM, from this sorrowful and diligent labour, implying that they are formed by labour and art. And again, Psalm cxxvii. “Who eat the bread of pain;” that is, AZABIM: which others render ‘the bread of them that labour,’ and others ‘the bread of sorrow.’ But whatever there may be in this variety, all agree in this,—that it is the AZABIM; that is, that which is formed and prepared by labour and art.

Under the figure of which word, the Spirit denominates all teachers of impious doctrines and works, which are their idols: for a lie requires much labour and care to make it appear like truth: whereas, on the contrary, the doctrine of the will is easy, as we have it Proverbs xiv. and truth is simple. Nor are these characters miserable and wretched in this way only, but also on account of their works which are wrought according to those doctrines. For as all such are destitute of faith, they must of necessity be continually wearied with the doctrines and works of men. These characters we have also before described under the words AVEN and AMAL. And they are represented Psalm x. also, in the verse which contains the words, “in the imaginations which

they have imagined ;” where we have set them forth at length.

The pursuit of these men also Isaiah has most sharply cut at chap. xlv. in a long description, wherein he introduces the former, or maker of an idol ; which passage tends much to elucidate the present verse ; let him, therefore, that will, read it.

Wherefore, whether you render it ‘ idols ’ or “ infirmities,” you will not do wrong ; provided that, you understand that it is the useless, sorrowful, and unavailable toil of those persons that is set forth, who, without faith, wish to make I know not what returns unto God by their works and doctrines ; not willing to be conformed unto God, but to conform God unto themselves. For I observed above, that he who thinks otherwise of God than he ought to think, conforms God to himself, and not himself unto God. But without faith it is impossible that any one should think rightly of God. And therefore, Isaiah rightly saith in the same place, ver. 9, 10, 11, “ They that make a graven image are all of them vanity. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image, that is profitable for nothing ? Behold all his fellows shall be ashamed : and the workmen they are of men. For while they presume that they form out their own goodness by these things, they are weakened more and more, and their conscience grows daily worse and worse. And therefore their idols in which they trust are their “ infirmities ” and weaknesses, whereby they become less and less accustomed to trust in God ; and the more their trust in him decreases the more idols they form out to themselves.

Hence the Hebrew has it, ‘ They shall multiply their idols,’ in an active verb : whereby is set forth the perverse and unhappy pursuit and toil of those who are always learning and never able to come into the knowledge of the truth : they are ever following after the law of righteousness, and never able to attain unto righteousness : though there are an infinite number of doctrines, sects, and works of serving God invented for this purpose ; as we at this day see among the Jews, but much more

still among those who are called Christians. But all the while their conscience is not quiet; nor do they know any other way of peace but their own works and doctrines: for they are necessarily involved in various and infinite questions and pursuits, and are fixed in none of them, and content with none; as experience every where abundantly testifies.

Thus, at this day, our colleges and monasteries, as they are most ignorant of faith,—what are they but so many most unhappy slaughter-houses of consciences? For by them, the miserable commonalty who are under their rule, are blinded by their impious opinions, and are taught works instead of faith. Thus the blind leads the blind, and both fall into the ditch. So that it is far more eligible and safe for a man to be a herdsman, or a mechanic of any kind, and to marry a wife and live in the common way of life, than to become one of these religious ones, or one of these priests. For herdsmen and mechanics are of all men the nearest to faith, for they think highly of all others and nothing of themselves; and if faith rise up, there is no way of common life to be despised, nor is any such way perilous.

*Afterwards they hastened.*

This is variously translated and expounded. Some render it ‘they cried,’ others ‘they gave,’ and Hieronymus, ‘behind the back of those that followed.’ I, however, follow our translator, that the sense might be, After the ungodly have toiled all that they could with their unhappy labour, yet they attained unto nothing but a greater fleeing, fear, and confusion of heart. As I have already adduced from Isaiah, “all his fellows shall be ashamed:” for it is only he who trusts in the Lord that shall not be ashamed and shall not hasten. He that thus trusteth shall be as bold as a lion, and shall fear the attack of no one; while the wicked shall fear and flee at the rustling of a leaf moved by the wind: as it is said above, Psalm i. “But the wicked are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.” As we have it also, Isaiah xxx. 15, 16, 17, “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in

quietness and confidence shall be your strength; and ye would not. But ye said, No: for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift: therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as ensign on a hill." And this fleeing, haste, and fear, are a bad conscience itself, which is always fleeing and never able to escape; it is always fearing, and yet that which it fears is always happening; it is never at rest, because "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." And therefore David rightly saith, that for peace of conscience they "multiply idols" to themselves: and yet, after all these things, they do nothing but increase their haste, their flight, their hurry, and their fear.

*I will not gather together their assemblies of blood.*

Here Christ plainly puts an end to all those infinite questions concerning the church, which some call 'the virtual church,' others 'the representative church,' and others a something else. Here Christ says, that he does not gather together those who are of blood: as it is written, John i. "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And this same thing Paul every where handles, and especially in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians; where he expressly and nobly proves, thall all are not Israel that are so after the flesh, but, that the children of the promise, and the children of Sarah the free-woman, not of Hagar the bondwoman, are accounted for the seed of Abraham. So that the church of Christ plainly excludes all respect of persons: as the Apostle elsewhere saith, 'In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free.' And so also, there is neither Roman nor German; 'but whosoever is of faith, is blessed with faithful Abraham.'

Wherefore, all the Roman piety and religion is to be abhorred, which so dreams and lies about the church. For the church is, and can be, nothing else but a con-



gregation of spiritual men, gathered together not into any one particular place, but into the same faith, hope, and love of the Spirit. Nor are the Romanists content alone with confining the church to one place, but they will have it to be at Rome, and will not allow any one to be a Christian, unless he be a Romanist. It is thus that they, with the most impudent temerity, set up and establish their lies contrary to the article of faith; for we believe, that ‘The holy Catholic church’ is, ‘The communion of saints.’ We do not say, The communion of the Romanists, nor of the persons of any other particular places. And Christ also said, Luke xvii. 20, 21, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” And again, Matt. xxiv. 5, “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many;” and ver. 23, “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.” Whereas these impious ones dare to say, in the plainest and most audacious words, ‘Behold the church is at Rome.’ ‘Christ is at Rome.’ ‘The vicegerent of Christ is at Rome.’

As, therefore, these times of which Christ spoke are now passing, and as the fury of the Roman impiety now openly resists the Gospel, and does not understand itself, and will not suffer any one else to understand, what the church is; let us arm our understandings with the Word of God, firmly believing and most surely knowing that the church of Christ is nothing more than an assembly of spiritual and believing men collected together, in what part soever of the world they may be, and whatever of flesh and blood they may be: and knowing also, that of whatever person, place, time they may be, and whatsoever things they may have which flesh and blood use, these things pertain not to, and have nothing to do with, the church.

Let us, therefore, take heed with all our powers, that we howl not with wolves, or romanize with the Romanists, by condemning those as heretics who are not among the assembly of the Roman church, or rather

the Roman senate. For Christ and his apostles Peter and Paul, saw that it would be necessary that the bodies and names of the saints must be in some place in the earth; and they knew that this necessity would be the cause of all this superstition and ungodliness, and that they would confine and fix the church to these places, and thus would draw away the term church from the truly spiritual assembly to a temporal one; and therefore, they have prepared beforehand warnings for us, and have given us an abundance of admonitions. And moreover, that they might not drag Christ himself in to support this their ungodliness, he took especial care by causing the city of Jerusalem to be destroyed, by an incomprehensible counsel, and trodden under foot by the gentiles; for if this had not been done, nobody could have prevented them from having this great pretext, for they would have built up the place of the Jews, which was endowed with such a specious appearance and great name, and would have made that the head of the church. And when this was prevented, then began this great evil at Rome under the name of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the words of Christ, 'Thou art Peter,' and 'feed my sheep,' which words they wrested with the most awful yet plausible pretext. But even here also Christ has powerfully resisted them; for he has never permitted the whole world to be subject to the Roman pontiff, which must have been the case if he had been the head by a divine right and authority, because no one can resist the Word and promise of God. And yet, after all this, we do not open our eyes nor behold the tricks and manœuvres of Satan. Hence Peter has painted out for us these figments and manœuvres most expressively thus, 2 Epist. ii. 'There shall arise false teachers among you who shall make merchandize of you.' And what can be a greater figment and trick, than to say, that "rock" signifies the ruling power of Peter, and "feeding" the monarchy of the Pope? But to what purpose is this monarchy but to works and deeds of avarice, whereby he exercises his practices of gain upon us?

Wherefore, to discharge and redeem my conscience,

and that I may not in the hour of death, nor in the day of judgment, be brought to account for an impious silence,—I now leave this written for all who hear and read me, and I affirm and aver before heaven and earth, that those articles of faith which I took upon me to defend at Leipsic, ‘that the whole church is the whole of the elect,’ and all those articles which follow therefrom, are most evangelical and truly Christian. And I aver and protest that all these articles were impiously condemned, and that the council of Constance was, in respect of these matters, a conventicle of Satan when it condemned them. I therefore condemn, excommunicate, shun, and detest all those who were present at those councils, or who consented to them, or do now consent unto them, whether they be the Pope, the bishops, kings, or who else soever they may be! These things I aver and protest, that I be not polluted with innocent blood!

And I farther protest, that if John Huss and Jerome of Prague were burnt for no other reason than, because of these articles, (for it appears that such was the case,) a great injury was done them, and that the Pope, together with his followers, were most cruel and most impious murderers, and enemies of Christ and his church. Let all who read these my asseverations be witnesses to this my faith and confession! I indeed, when at Leipsic, did not know the full sense of those articles, though I saw the words of them to be most Christian. But now, since the book of John Huss is extant, I see from the preceding and succeeding parts that the sense and meaning of those articles were most Christian.—What is the Pope! what is the world! what is the prince of the world! that, on account of him, I should deny the truth of the Gospel for which Christ died? Let him that prevails prevail for ever, and let him that perishes perish for ever!—These, God helping me, shall ever be my sentiments!

But let us now return to the Psalm.—We see, therefore, that the scope of this Psalm is, that Christ, as he is foretold to be a great King and Lord in a great and

glorious people, begins to reign contrary to the sense and natural ideas of all men. For other kings are born that they might reign; but this King dies that he might reign. And to other kings also people are born over whom they might reign. So that this is a wonderful kingdom. It does not consist of those who are of high blood, birth, or dignity, nor of the multitude and power of the world, nor of self-righteousnesses and powers, nor of any thing else that is of, and makes a show in, the world: but consists of the Spirit in the sight of God. Thus we have it written, Psalm xxii. 29, 30, "And none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." And Isaiah liii. 10, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." And again Isaiah xi. "And his rest shall be glorious." In all which passages the death and resurrection of Christ are set forth; as it is also in the whole of this Psalm. But reason cannot believe or receive that the glory of a kingdom should belong to one dead and lying in the sepulchre, and that a new generation should be a seed that should serve *him*, who laid down his life, and made his soul an offering for sin, and that he should see his seed and prolong his days. For who would say to one dead, Behold thou shalt be a king, and people shall fall under thee to all eternity? These things indeed might be said at the birth of any one.—It was necessary, therefore, that he must rise again from the dead that these scriptures might be fulfilled.

And hence, when he is dying and praying to be preserved, delivering his soul into the hand of the Father, yet he saith, 'that his will is in the saints, and that his inheritance should not be of "blood," but of the "magnificent;"' as is plainly shewn in his miracle of words: whereby he teaches, that he should rise again: for he could not reign while dead, and yet he says that he does reign. Rightly, therefore, doth Paul say to Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. that he should remember that the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead; adding, "according to the

scriptures;" as we also sing in our creeds. And this is quite contrary to the feelings of all, that one dead should possess a kingdom; and we have need of the scriptures here to lean upon; which, however, no one would understand, were not the Holy Spirit to open them unto us. For who would read from these verses that Christ should rise from the dead? Nay, how few are there who understand this passage thus even now?

Ver. 5.—*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou art he that restores mine inheritance unto me.*

Hieronimus renders the last part of this verse thus, 'Thou art the possessor of my lot,' the pronoun *unto me* is redundant. This verse is taken out of the law of Moses, where it is written, that to the Levites and the priests there was not an inheritance given among the children of Israel: "for the Lord (says Moses) is their inheritance.' After the words of whom, David here says, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance:" and I think that it was from this figure of the land that was divided among the children of Israel, and denied to the priests, that the prophet, under the teaching of the Spirit, derived this Psalm:—namely, that the inheritance of Christ would not be the same as that of other men, nor received from "blood," nor from any earthly things; even as the Levites had no inheritance of this kind among the children of Israel. But I think that there is here a Hebraism, "the portion of mine inheritance," instead of 'my hereditary portion,' or, 'the portion that shall fall to me.' For many by "inheritance" understand the church, whose portion it is certain the Lord is. But, according to my judgment, it is Christ here speaking in his own person concerning his hereditary portion, which should fall to him; which is proved by what follows, "and of my cup:" for we have said, Psalm xi. that "cup," in the scripture use of it, signified that portion or measure which is allotted to every one from above; and that 'to drink of the cup,' is, to bear or to receive this appointed measure. And

here again there is a Hebraism, 'The Lord is the portion of my cup:' for 'The Lord is my cup,' or that which is apportioned and allotted me; so that I shall receive nothing else but the Lord himself for my reward.

It is wonderful, therefore, that when he is dying he glories that he has that inheritance which is the Lord himself: thereby, again, implying that he should rise again from the dead, in order that he might receive this promised inheritance. And what has he not who has for his portion the Lord of all? And who has the Lord of all?—he that has nothing of any other things, and does not seek after any thing but those things which are God's, and seeks after these things even through death and every other evil. Hence, it comes to pass, that when such an one loses all things, he finds all things, while he chooses out no inheritance for himself, all things come unto him of their own accord. And hence he saith with certainty, "Thou art he that shall restore mine inheritance unto me:" though the Hebrew saith with more propriety, "Thou shalt establish unto me mine inheritance:" for he does not speak of restitution, but of constitution. As if he had said, It is mine to do and to suffer all things, to leave and to lose all things, that I may obey thee: but thou, without any of my care, shalt establish and confirm that which shall be my inheritance. I shall not seek it, being content that thou art mine inheritance and my portion, whom when I possess, mine inheritance is confirmed and settled in safety.

Here we see how Christ arrogates nothing to himself, though he is not also in any anxiety about himself: he only desires to do the will of God his Father, all other things, he takes for granted, are well taken care of. But, as to us poor wretches of men, how miserably and tumultuously are we concerned about dioceses and ecclesiastical hierarchies (in which, nevertheless, we are only bondmen and slaves,) as if the salvation or perdition of the church were placed in our own hands. Why do not the Romanists commit the cause of their servile primate, in faith, unto God, seeing that Christ is heir and Lord of all things. Let them, if their cause is good,

commit it unto God, and disengage themselves from all over anxiety about it.

Ver. 6.—*The lines are fallen unto me in excellences. My inheritance is also excellent.*

David here goes on in the general usage of scripture, where the measures, or division, or boundaries, by which the inheritances of the earth are divided, are called “lines;” as in Psalm lxxviii. 55, “He divided them an inheritance by line.” And Psalm cv. 11, “Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.” Hence, Hieronymus has rendered the passage, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” And Deut. xxxii. 8, 9, we have it, “He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” As if he had said, As there, the lines did not fall beyond the place where the number of the children of Israel was, and where the number ended, and as there began the bounds of the gentiles, out of whom he chose none, but his portion and his lines were this people only: so now (saith he) I will not choose any dregs of the men of blood; but, as then, I made a corporal separation of the lines of my people from all the people of the gentiles; so now, much more shall there be found spiritual lines of my people according to the number of the spiritual people; so that wheresoever the lines or boundaries of my believing people end throughout the whole world, there the boundaries of the unbelieving begin: for they are not mingled in spirit though they are mingled in body.

And faith is this boundary or this line that appor-tions out the inheritance; for it is that which settles and defines the number of the faithful; and whatsoever is without and beyond this, are the boundaries of the gentiles, and are called, Malachi i. 4, “the border of wickedness:” for “he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Hence we see, that none can be called the church, but that which be-

lieveth. Wherefore, the Roman pontiffs, together with their church, are truly idols and things merely made up by ungodly men: for they strive to break these lines and to stretch them out wherever they please, even unto that which is not "excellent," but most evil and dark; but all is in vain. For Christ does not say the lines are 'extended,' but "are fallen:" it is not ye that extend them, they fall from heaven!

He here describes, therefore, the inheritance which the Lord ordained for him, in the place of those who are of blood. "I will not (says he) gather together those that are of blood." Whom then will he gather together?—the excellent, the beautiful, the delightful, and the sweet. And who are these? They have no great name, no dignified person; they are not Jews nor Greeks; they are not Romanists nor Babylonians; they are not this great man nor that;—they are those who, in the Spirit, are pure, fair, beautiful, and sweet. For, according to the Hebrew word, "in pleasant (or excellent) places," signifies beautiful and sweet places; which expresses how Christ is well pleased with those that believe in him; and it expresses also what an abomination those are to him who are unbelieving, and who glory in flesh and blood.

And here again, as I said, the resurrection is testified, where he says, "to me." For, what "me" is here signified? Does he not say "Preserve me, O Lord?" Thus (he would say) I truly die, but I shall rise again, and my inheritance shall be most sweet to me.

And he says also "lines," in the plural; for though the whole church is one, yet it is scattered about in various places throughout the world, because of the ministry of the word; because one could not administer unto all. So that each 'line' is a church; in which there is the same Christ, the same baptism, and the same Word.

And he says "they have fallen:" because the believers in Christ are multiplied, not by human efforts and works, but by the power of the grace of God: and all those who are converted come in quite unexpected



to us, and are such as we never could have foreseen : as Isaiah saith, xlix. 21, " Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate ? and who hath brought up these ? " For thus does Christ also shew that he receives all things from the Father, and that these lines have fallen to him, as if by lot, in most pleasant places.

Nor is this without its peculiar force, when he says, " are fallen to me," and, " a goodly heritage." The whole of this is against the outside show of those who judge of the church according to its external appearance, and fix it to certain places, confining their dioceses to certain bounds. Thus we say at this day, that one church is larger than another, according to the space of earth that it occupies and the multitude of people which it contains ; whereas, the church stands alone in faith, hope, and love, whether it be a small church or a large one, whether it have a fair outside show or whether it have great power. Nay, because it is in the eyes of Christ pleasant and beautiful, (as David here says,) it is thereby understood that it is unpleasant and bitter to the world : as the church herself saith, Song i. 5, 6, " I am black but comely. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me." That is, Christ has subjected me to the cross and to evils ; and thus, outwardly I am black, but internally I am fair. For he that pleases Christ must displease himself ; and he must be black to himself, who would be fair in the eyes of Christ. For he that pleases himself belongs to the assemblies of blood and of the cross.

Why, therefore, do we presume upon ourselves for being great in the world and in the flesh ; bishop above bishop, and church above church ? Christ does not here prove or approve the church for being visibly fair and great in the eyes of men, but for that which he sees in her ; that is, her faith, which humbles her and crucifies her to all things here below. But let us suffer our great hierarchy to have the name of the great headship ;—this will only bring it under the lash of these words :

“Nor will I be mindful of their names through my lips.” They are the work of men, and therefore they please men.

Ver. 7.—*I will bless the Lord, who hath given me understanding: moreover, even unto night my reins chasten me.*

Hieronymus and the Hebrew have it thus: ‘I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: moreover also my reins instruct me in the night.’ And here, indeed, a great and difficult work is pointed out; that is, to be filled with counsel: that is, for him, who, when in the midst of death and sufferings, when he is straitened and filled with fear on every side, knows what to do and whither to flee: for those who are destitute of this counsel flee continually but never escape. Hence, Isaiah xi. 2, couples counsel and strength together: “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.” For if thou be not powerful with the counsel no strength will stand by thee in death. And hence, it is not only the gift of God to bear evil and death, but also to know how it is to be borne, and whence strength is to be obtained to bear it: as we have it, Wisdom viii. 21, “Nevertheless, when I perceived that I could not otherwise obtain her, except God gave her me, (and that was a point of wisdom also, to know whose gift she was,)” &c.

What therefore was the counsel, or understanding, that was given to Christ? Namely this,—that he did not flee in death, and did not go back, but said, “Preserve me, O Lord;” delivering the whole of his cause into God’s hand. And so we also are wont with overflowing feelings to rejoice when delivered from dangers and perils; not so much because we are delivered from those dangers, as because we were led so to conduct ourselves as to be brought out of them. For there are many found, who, when they are well, know how to give right counsel unto the sick, and when they are free from

all peril have all wisdom, and can teach any one. But when the waves mount up unto heaven and sink down again into the deep, their soul is melted because of trouble, they reel to and fro, and stagger like drunken men, and all their wisdom is swallowed up; as we have it Psalm cvii.; so that no one stands in so much need of counsel as they who were before the masters of all counsel. Wherefore, here the divine mercy remarkably and excellently shines forth, which, in the time of so great necessity, is always near and enlightens the heart trembling and destitute and devoid of counsel. And this is what David prayed for before, saying, "Preserve me, O Lord." For by this counsel the heart is preserved in the midst of this shadow of death. And David himself indeed in the following verse shews what this counsel is.

But what is the meaning of "Moreover also my reins instructed me in the night season." What are "the reins" of Christ which 'emend' (as Augustine renders it) or 'chasten' (as our translator has it) or 'instruct' (as Hieronymus translates it, and as it is in the Hebrew)? What can this be but that which Paul saith, Hebrews v. 8, 9, "Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." And that of Matt. xxvi. 41, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." For although he was full of counsel, yet he felt the infirmity of our nature resisting and struggling against that counsel; in which struggle he learnt obedience by experience. Even as we also are the more instructed the more we are assaulted with temptations, if we are led to endure them prudently and wisely: and, (which seems a contrariety,) the more the man is overcome as to his own strength, the more full of counsel, the more courageous, and the more faithful his spirit is made: as Paul glories, 2 Cor. xii. 'When I am weak, then am I strong. For strength is made perfect in weakness.' Thus the "reins" of Christ, though they were holy and immaculate, yet, being weak, they shuddered at suffering and death, be-

cause the human nature had rather live and be well : and yet, under all this horror, his counsel compelled him to watch and be concerned for the things that were of God. And we said above, Psalm vii. that “reins” signified natural pleasure, and also the concupiscent powers : which pleasure hates all unpleasantness and sorrow, and loves quiet and delight : which, in all men, as it did in Christ also, makes suffering and death to be bitter and hard to bear : which things must be overcome by “the spirit of counsel and of might.”

And David expressively adds ‘in the nights :’ which is much better than our translation “unto night.” For here, although we may take nights as signifying, allegorically, adversities ; (for the reins, or the pleasurable powers, if there be no adversities cannot at all instruct, because they neither excite nor are excited, and their peculiar property is to instruct and stir up the spirit in temptations ;) yet, I would rather understand it as signifying, simply, and without allegory, the time of night ; which is a time particularly adapted to fears and tremblings, and for the secret operations of God : so that therein the time is exactly adapted to the work.

Hence we read, Gen. xv. that after the sun was gone down, “a horror of great darkness fell upon Abraham.” And, Gen. xxxii. we read, ‘that Jacob wrestled with an angel until the morning.’ And thus also in the following Psalm, David says, “Thou hast proved my heart, thou hast visited me in the night.” For as the night is a time fitted for prayer, (as Christ is recorded to have prayed frequently in the night,) so also it is a fit time for meditating and for suffering all divine things. And so again, Christ began his agony with the beginning of the night. And again, Job iv. 13, 14, we have it, “In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men. Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.” And we read many things of the same kind in the scriptures. For the night, as being the time when man is disengaged from all worldly concerns, and when all things are silent, is most adapted for those divine operations ; that is, for

those internal sufferings, which are the fear and horror of death; by which the spirit of man is most powerfully instructed, if he be wise and sustain the teaching. And hence, these things came into a very usual expression with the Psalmist, "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night;" not expressing exactly what that terror is; for that is known only by experience.—But he that will know more about these nights in their allegorical significations, let him consult the sermons of Taulerus.

Ver. 8.—*I saw the Lord always before me: for he is on my right hand, so that I should not be moved.*

Here he opens the mystery of that counsel for which he blessed the Lord in the preceding verse:—namely, 'that he set the Lord alone before his eyes;' and such a Lord 'who was always at his right hand, that he should not be moved;' that is, a propitious and merciful Lord. And this is what was shewn at the beginning of the Psalm, where he cried, "Preserve me, O God, for I hope in thee." This is what I have so often observed already—that no one can sustain a suffering or death, unless he is able to use this counsel, and unless he is able to set before him an all-merciful God, yea, a God as full of mercy as possible; as it is said, Wisdom i. 1, "Think of the Lord in goodness." And again, Psalm iii. 2, 3, "Many there be that say unto my soul, There is no help for him in his God. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head." And again, Psalm xxvi. 3, "For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: I have walked in thy truth." For I have said,—that the object of hope is the pure unmerited mercy of God freely held out to us in the promise, and nothing but this; which is to be begged and sought for by the unworthy. And hence, all those counsellors are the worst, and are devilish, who cast their sins in the teeth of the suffering or dying, or who set before them God as an exactor, who is to be gained over by satisfactions and proposed good works. The Lord never gave such counsel, but Satan; and

therefore all who follow it, grow nearer and nearer to desperation and blasphemy than to blessing and mercy.

The Hebrew and Hieronymus have it, 'I set the Lord always before me.' And the Lord being thus set before the man, gives him a heart courageous, happy, and prepared to all good works, and to do and bear all things: and it is this 'setting before,' as I have often said, that is to be the spring of our whole life and of all our works. For who would not do and dare every thing most willingly who had a persuasion that he pleased God, and that God was propitious and favourable? And what sin, however pleasing, would he not contemn and hate while enjoying this trust and confidence in God? This faith, in truth, does not, and cannot, do any evil, even as also it cannot be overcome by any evil. No one, but he who has experienced it, can conceive how this faith draws from all evil and moves to all good. Wherefore, in this verse, the Spirit most beautifully sets before us the very nature, effects, and worth of that faith which thus trusteth in God. For what is it to trust in God, but for the man to set God always before him, and to be firmly persuaded that God is on his right hand, so that he shall not be moved? And he that remains in this 'setting before,' how shall he not always live well and work well? What storm of evil shall ever subvert him? He is founded upon the firm rock!

Hence the Hebrew here uses very emphatic words.—First we have "I placed" or 'set.' For 'to place or set' implies firmness and a foundation: shewing, that faith is an affection or state of mind, constant, and most firm, which never wavers nor totters at any time.

Then we have "the Lord." For the faith is not fixed in our own works; no, nor in any creature whatever; but in God alone: and hence it is called divine strength, because it deals with the divine mercy. Whereas, an evil conscience and ungodliness deal with a man's own sin and free-will.

The next is, "before my eyes." This expresses the liveliness and vigilance of faith. For faith is not, as some of our moderns will have it, *a habit* that lies

still, snoring and sleeping in the soul; but is always turned towards God with a straight and perpetually looking and watching eye. Hence it comes to pass, that it is the author and origin of all works, nay, the first thing and last in all good works, yea, it is the whole life.

And to these he adds "always." This is to embrace every time: because faith makes the good times of peace, and endures the evil times of war; it is never inactive; nay, it is always most active. Hence we see, how excellent a logician David is, who gives faith its right definition. And what else are all the Psalms than certain definitions of faith, hope, and love? And it is under these feelings and affections that all and each of us are exercised; and they shew, that faith, hope, and love, are properly certain pure and divine affections.

"For he is on my right hand:" that is, he is present in secret and in spirit, even though my enemies persecute me on the left hand, or openly. We have the same, Psalm xx. 6, "With the saving strength of his right hand:" that is, his right hand is powerfully saved, how weak soever his left hand may be. And so here also, Christ is left in weakness on the left hand, but is upheld by power on his right hand.—The scriptures use the expressions 'right hand,' and 'left hand,' figuratively, for the internal and external man; as Christ says, Matt. vi. 3, "But thou when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret." Wherein he means, that alms are the secret of the right hand, and that the doing them openly is the left hand: of which we shall perhaps say more hereafter.

"That I should not be moved." He does not say, that I should not be touched, that I should not be tempted, or that I should not be made to feel. For faith is a powerful affection. The man wishes to rest after being exercised, but he cannot, nor is he permitted so to do; yet, he always remains conqueror, and is never moved nor hurled from his place. For this is the victory even our faith, saith John, 1 Epist. v. And Paul

saith, that God always enables us to triumph (that is, to be triumphers,) in Christ.

Ver. 9. — *Therefore, my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

This is what I said before,—that this good confidence of heart in God, is infallibly followed by joy of heart, and the most sweet affections toward God and all creatures. For the Holy Spirit is so poured into the heart of him that thus believeth, that his heart, in return, is opened and enlarged unto all promptitude to do and bear all things freely, both before God and before men. He loves his enemies as well as his friends, and is made the willing servant of all that he might profit all: being made, not only not careful, but prodigal of his own. Thus, Psalm iv. when David had said, “The light of thy countenance is lifted up upon us, O Lord:” he immediately adds, “Thou hast put gladness in my heart:” here again coupling those two things,—faith and joy of heart; as he did also in this place.

And upon this joy immediately follow praise, preaching, gratitude, and a glorying in the divine mercy, and that with the greatest joy of heart. And therefore, he does not simply say, my tongue ‘shall confess thee,’ but “shall rejoice:” that is, shall speak gloryingly and exultingly.—Which affection the Hebrew sets forth with another and very emphatic word, thus, ‘My glory hath rejoiced:’ but we have “tongue” instead of ‘glory.’—And here it appears to me, that it is peculiar to David above all others, to call vocal and external praise and boasting, his “glory;” in which he not only glorifies God, but, from the intenseness of his affection, glories in that glorifying of him: for he thus speaks, Psalm cvi. 47, “That we may give thanks unto thy holy name, and triumph in thy praise.” And Psalm xxx. 12, “To the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.” And again, cviii. 1, “I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.” And also, lvii. 8, “Awake up, my glory: awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will



awake right early.”—In all these instances it is evident, that ‘my glory’ is the same as ‘my singing,’ or ‘my voice,’ with which he glories and glorifies. Hence, we must take care that we do not here understand “my glory” to signify the fame of the Psalmist, but rather, his duty wherein he glories in God, nay, wherein he glories and rejoices in glorifying God. Nor do I remember reading “glory” to have this signification in any other part of the scriptures. This expression, therefore, is the effusion of a bursting and overflowing affection: but this, experience and exercise alone can bring a man to the understanding of: it cannot be taught either by the tongue or by the pen.

But a question may here arise,—Whether all these things are said in the person of Christ in the time of his passion? If we receive it thus, it is manifest that Christ exulted in the midst, yea, in the very excess, of his passion; as these words of the Psalm shew: concerning which, many men have started many and different queries, and I know not whether their searchings have ever fully satisfied them. I, however believe, that there is no necessity for referring these words to the passion: for the prophets neither preserve the exact order of all things as they were carried on by Christ: nor do they sing all things concerning him in one place, but leave many things out in many places. Nor, indeed, is it necessary that every thing should be described in its exact order, when the prophecy speaks in the person of Christ or of any other. It is sufficient that all things which are predicted are true, and that the rest are left to be revealed in the fulfilment of the thing predicted. Even the evangelists themselves do not always preserve the exact order of things which they relate.

And, as a general rule for understanding the scriptures, especially the prophets, we are to observe,—that many things are spoken by way of anticipation and recapitulation. Thus here, while Christ confesses that he rejoices and glories in the Father, and proclaims him, saying nothing about all the works and miracles that he wrought during that joying and glorying, he comes at

once to the last thing. As if he had said, I will not only glory in and proclaim thee, but, saying nothing about all my works and miracles, and my whole life, I will even willingly die; and, with the same confidence I am also assured, that my flesh shall rest indeed, but in the hope and expectation of a most sure resurrection.

The Hebrew verb "shall rest," is the same as that which we have in the preceding Psalm, "shall rest, (or dwell,) in thy holy mountain." Hence Hieronymus renders this passage 'My flesh shall dwell confidently:' and it signifies, as we have said, a quiet and peaceful habitation: as if he said, as in Psalm iv. "I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest." And, by another signification of the verb, it may be rendered 'to bury:' as in Psalm vii. 5, "Let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust:" that is, bury it. So that the passage may be rendered thus, 'My flesh shall be buried in hope.' But Peter, Acts ii. does not cite this verse according to the Hebrew, but according to the LXX. neither touching the verb 'to bury' nor 'my glory:' though neither translation injures the sense.

This is therefore a new prophecy never heard of any one before. For here, the one Christ alone casts away the general punishment of the whole human race, contained in Gen. iii. "And unto dust shalt thou return:" nor does the scripture, which consigns all men to dust, ever say any such thing of any one but Christ. He alone, by a new and glorious MIGHTAM, bears this sweet and all-gladdening news,—that his flesh should not return to dust, but should, in peace, die with the fullest expectation.

Each of these golden words is to be weighed and pondered—"My flesh." Herein, he excepts his flesh from the flesh of all men; for the flesh of no other ever remained and rested in hope, but was changed and turned into dust. And here he intimates his death; for, the breath being separated from the body, his flesh died as the flesh of all men does. Here, therefore, is the great miracle,—that he should die as all other men do,

but that he should not see corruption.—And “shall rest,” that is, even though it be buried as the flesh of all men is, yet it shall be in quiet and in peace; it shall not be touched by any rottenness or corruption, nor by any worm: which peace and rest the flesh of no other ever knew.—Again, “in hope.” It did not rest thus for ever, but in the expectation that it should be raised again, and should live.

Behold, therefore, in what peculiar words David foretold that Christ should rise again; whereby he shews, that he had an all-clear and full knowledge that Christ should die and rise again. And therefore, the apostles have justly cited this passage especially above all others.

Ver. 10.—*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

He now explains what he had before said, “shall rest in hope.” And this is the “hope,”—‘thou wilt not leave me, nor suffer me to see corruption:’ that is, without doubt, thou wilt raise me up. And it pleased him to say, not my spirit, (*spiritus*) but “my soul:” in the Hebrew *NAPHSI*: because, “soul” (*anima*) is used in the scriptures to signify the ‘life,’ or the ‘soul’ that gives life and motion to the body: whereby the Holy Spirit shews, that Christ was to be raised again to corporal life.

“Holy One,” in this passage, is *HASID*; which is a spirit sanctified by grace: and Christ every where in the scriptures is called the “Holy One” of God: even as he is also called “the Lord’s Christ.” Nor indeed is there any one found in the scriptures called “Holy One” of God, in the singular number, or “thine Holy One,” but Christ only; of whom alone David is here speaking.

And I consider the Hebrew expression “see corruption,” which signifies ‘to be corrupted,’ is sufficiently well known; as, ‘to see death,’ signifies ‘to die,’ and, ‘not to see death,’ ‘not to die:’ as we have it in Luke ii. and John viii. which expression the scripture,

perhaps, uses, in order to set forth the divine power : in which, nothing dies, or is corrupted, but all things live : but it is we that die to ourselves, and perish, and are corrupted to ourselves.

The sense, therefore, is most plain ; and it has been set forth by the apostles with great fulness, and with much diligence. But here also men have begun to dispute, presuming all things upon their abilities and understandings,—whether Christ was in hell according to his soul, or according to his substance? And what are we to understand by his being in hell?—Many here have dared to contradict the Spirit, and to say, that the soul of Christ was not in hell, only in sense, feeling, or affection. For these most excellent commentators and glossaries on the Word of God have glossed the passage thus, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;” that is (say they) ‘the affection or feeling of my soul.’ Again, “He descended into hell:” that is (say they) ‘He caused his feeling or affection to be in hell.’ But, despising these frivolous and impious triflings, let us rather understand the expressions of the prophet simply as they are : and if we cannot understand them, let us faithfully, believe them : for the authority of this scripture is of more weight than the capacities and abilities of all the human race put together ; as Augustine saith. Most certainly, the soul of Christ truly, and in substance, descended into hell. But *what* this descent was, thou art to believe is not yet fully revealed, at least unto all of us.

Peter, Acts ii. 24, says, “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of hell, (or, as the Greek has it,) of death:” wherein he seems to signify, that Christ was loosed from the pains of death, or of hell, at his resurrection. For hell is the horror of death : that is, the feeling sense of death, under which men have the dread of death, and yet do not escape it, being condemned thereunto : for death that is despised is not felt. We see, moreover, that the scriptures describe two places of the dead,—a pit for the body, and a hell for the soul. But Peter here does not say that death or hell alone was

loosed on Christ, or the pains of death or hell; (for many saints may be believed to have been in death and in hell, without any pain, having died in peace;) but he seems to intimate, that Christ suffered pains in hell after his death, that he might conquer all things for us.

Thus, I shall ever cleave to the words of Peter until I shall have been taught better,—and believe that Christ, differently from all others, felt not only death but also the pains of death and of hell:—that his flesh, indeed, rested in hope, but that his soul tasted hell:—and that this is what is meant in the present passage, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

And these negatives, “thou wilt not leave,” and “thou wilt not suffer,” are more powerful than any affirmatives; and more firmly attest the resurrection, than if he had said, ‘Thou shalt bring my soul out of hell, and shalt preserve thine Holy One from corruption.’ And so, that scripture also, “Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her:” that is, shall most certainly remain with her. And so again here, “Thou wilt not leave;” that is, “thou wilt most speedily and quickly bring out.” And “Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;” that is, thou wilt make all haste to bring me to the sound life of the body. For the Holy Spirit seems to me in these words to speak simply, and to have rather a respect unto the *time*, than to the *place*, or any other circumstance. So that the sense might be, thou wilt not leave me so long as the time in which bodies are naturally used to be corrupted, but will raise me up before the time in which they generally see corruption. Otherwise, the scripture might have appeared to speak of some one that should be preserved by a miracle in the grave and in hell until the day of judgment: though no one was ever thus preserved, nor preserved in the grave at all, except Christ; for although some bodies, as in Egypt, are preserved by being anointed with myrrh, which prevents putrefaction, yet, even here the flesh is consumed and

absorbed in the preparation, which is contrary to what is here said, “My *flesh* shall rest in hope.”

Ver. 11.—*Thou hast made known to me the paths of life: thou wilt fill me with joy by thy countenance: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Hieronymus renders it ‘Thou shewest me the path of life, a fulness of joys in thy presence, and eternal beauties at thy right hand:’ where he makes three accusative cases governed by the verb “thou shewest;” one of which our translator has turned into a verb, “thou wilt fill;” and the third he has turned into a nominative, “there are pleasures:” no difference however is thus made in the sense. Peter in the Acts ii. follows the same rendering as our translator.

David here describes the glory of the resurrection in three points, eternal life, eternal joy, and eternal pleasure.—“The way of life” is so called, because it is that which leads from death unto life: as if he had said with the Apostle, Rom. vi. 9, “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.” For Christ before did not know the way of life experimentally; for this life is only the way of death; or rather a race unto death. But to rise again unto eternal life, this is to know “the way of life,” and this is an effect of the power and right hand of God only; as it is here said, “Thou hast made known unto me the paths of life. And Psalm lxxxix. 48, “What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?” As if he had answered ‘No one!’ Hence Psalm lxxviii. 20, “He that is our God is the God of salvation: and to God the Lord belong the issues from death:” because death being swallowed up in victory, he brings us into eternal life: as he promised, Hosea xiii. 14, 15, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hidden from mine eyes. Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the Lord shall

come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up;" that is, sin; which is the spring, fountain, sting, and power of death.

'Eternal joy' or 'the fulness of joy,' (as Hieronymus renders it,) in the presence of God, and not badly so. This is that joy wherein the God of gods in Zion is beheld as he is, face to face, where the heart is filled to the full: so that it is expressed in words becoming the subject "the fulness of joys." In this life we taste and know it in part only, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. Here, there shall be no pain mixed with smiling, no sorrow mingled with comfort; which must of necessity be the case in this life, while we are at a distance from God, and only see through a glass darkly. Wherefore, we may call the joy of this life a joy in obscurity; but that joy, the joy of the countenance, or face, or presence of God. It is thus that the Hebrew expresses it, without a preposition, 'The fulness of the joys of thy face, (or countenance, or presence:)' where we are led to understand that the fulness of joys stands in the face and glory of God being revealed unto us: as David saith in the Psalm following, ver. 15, "I shall be satisfied when I awake up after thy likeness." And Christ saith, John xiv. 21, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." This is eternal joy, because it is the fulness of joys; whereas the joys which are revealed and imparted unto the saints in this state of miserable existence, are but as certain drops, and little fore-tastes, which soon pass over: but that fulness of joys which is revealed in the face of God, is perfect and endureth for evermore. "For this is life eternal, (saith John,) that they might know thee the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

"At thy right hand are pleasures for ever more." These Hieronymus calls 'eternal beauties.' It seems to me, however, that all the pleasures of all the endowments

of body and soul, and all the faculties, are here signified ; or, the enjoyment (as we say in the present day) of the objective pleasures or delights which Christ bears in his own glory. For as at the left hand of God, that is, in this life, the man is in all things touched with sorrow ; so, at the right hand of God, that is, in the life to come, he is in all things filled with joy. For he that is happy in the vision of God, is then happy in every thing ; he has nothing in his view that can give him sorrow, but all things are full of joy, all things co-operate in his joy, all things heighten his joy, all is favour, all is smile ! As Lactantius sings with reference to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which was in the time of spring—

Behold the beauties of the new-born world,  
Bright from the bosom of the spring, declare,  
That all creation with her God revives !

And the same expression is here in the feminine gender NEIMOTH, which was above in the masculine NEINIM. “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant or beautiful places :” but both places shew the pleasure which Christ has in those things. And in the Hebrew, the last expression NEZAH is of a doubtful construction, signifying, as we render it ‘unto the end,’ (*infinem*,) and also, as Hieronymus renders it, ‘eternal :’ which may be applied to all three of the particulars,—to ‘the ways or paths of life,’ to ‘the fulness of joys,’ and to ‘the pleasures at the right hand of God ;’ so that we may understand each as being eternal. Or, it may apply to the “pleasures” only ; which Hieronymus calls “beauties ;” perhaps, because we are delighted and pleased with things beautiful and fair. But all these things will take place, in their fulfilment, when these our bodies, and the heavens and the earth also shall have become a new creation, at the end of the world ; where all things shall be pleasant and sweet. In the mean time, as Paul saith, ‘The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation ; because the creature itself also (saith he)



shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,' Rom viii. 19—21.

“The right hand of God,” as we have observed before, signifies the life to come, or, that life which is in the presence of God: which life now begins by faith, and is to be consummated by vision. Amen!—We see, therefore, that this one Psalm above all others most clearly predicts the resurrection, and the glory of the resurrection: so that it is worthily called the MICHAM or ‘golden Psalm’ of David; who here most signally evinces the knowledge which he had of divine things.

## PSALM XVII.

A PRAYER OF DAVID.

A new title this, a ‘prayer of David:’ which title plainly shews the subject-matter of the Psalm, which does not appear to me to be very different from that of Psalm v. and many others,—that is, a general complaint of the righteous people against the most injurious, most persecuting, and spirit-slaying hypocrites, with whom that righteous nation are ever at war; even as there was a continual war between Jacob and Esau, and between the ungodly and the Word of truth: and therefore, it will be very easy to give the sense and meaning of this Psalm, after having expounded the preceding Psalm of prayer.

Ver. 1.—*Hear my righteousness, O Lord, attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.*

This petition repeated thrice indicates a great power of feeling and many tears: because, the craft of the ungodly, in truth, grieves and afflicts the spiritual men

more than their power and violence: for we can get a knowledge of open force and violence, and, when we see the danger, can in some way guard against it. But craft destroys us before we know any thing about it. Hence Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 29, when he had said "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" said also, under a more powerful feeling, "Who is offended, and I burn not?" Here, he does not say "I am weak," but "I burn:" because, it is a much lighter thing to suffer weakness with those who suffer weakness, that is, to suffer with the suffering, than to burn on account of the offended and offending. And Acts xx. 31, he bears witness, 'that, for the space of three years, he ceased not to warn every one night and day, with tears; knowing, that grievous wolves should enter in among them not sparing the flock, and should speak perverse things, driving away disciples after them.' And again, Philip. iii. 18, 19, he saith, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame," &c.

If then the prophets, if the apostles, thus burned and wept on account of the hypocrites of their times, when there was a greater abundance of the Spirit upon the church, what have we not to fear? What floods of tears can be sufficient for us in these lost times, and in all this security, in which we are made to believe that the devils are all dead or asleep? whereas, they are ruling with the most horrible tyranny, having usurped the name of Christ and of the saints, and used it for the establishment of their own purposes. Such times were predicted with an abundance of clearness, but we are insensible; and, like the Jews, we in this ignorance fulfil all these things, which were foretold by the apostles would happen unto us;—that we should be involved in that ungodliness which we imagine belongs not to us but to others;—wo unto this last and worst of ages!

The Hebrew saith, absolutely, without the pronoun "*my*," 'Hear righteousness:' at which expression, (to say nothing about the Jews and their darkness, who say

that David, for this sin of boasted righteousness, was punished by his fall into the sin of adultery,) even those of our day also are offended, who will ascribe this expression unto Christ only. But as it appears to me, this is a more vehement petition; which prays absolutely that “righteousness” should be heard, rather than ‘*his* righteousness.’ For almost every word in this prayer shews on what persons David had his eye. He had his eye upon the multitude and magnitude of those hypocrites, who not only attribute and ascribe to themselves all good works and righteousness, but also arrogate to themselves, and assure themselves of, the efficacy of their prayers, and their certain interest in the mercy of God: whereas, these things are all feigned artfully to the deception of many of the weak. So that there is no other remedy for the truth to adopt than tears and prayers; which may beg of God, that he would hear “righteousness,” or, that which is right, or, the righteous cause; such as faith, and the words and works of faith; and that he would undertake the protection of these, and defend them against all the ungodly feignedness and pretence of these characters.—This prayer, therefore, expresses the feelings of a godly and piously loving person, in this manner;—though I am unworthy who beg these things of thee, O Lord; yet, as the *cause* is that wherein thy word, and faith and true righteousness are concerned, it is a cause worthy of not being permitted by thee to be oppressed, nor turned into the deceiving of unhappy souls; which these ravening wolves do not cease to devour by these their feigned words.

There are some who would render the passage thus, ‘Hear me, O Lord of righteousness:’ as in Psalm iv. 1, “Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness.” But all this I leave to every one’s own judgment. The Hebrew text is not against such a rendering, though I am content with the former rendering.

“Which goeth not out of lips of deceit, (or, feigned lips.)”—Here he manifestly attacks the hypocrites, whose doctrines and prayers, he says, come forth out of feigned lips.

But the expressions may be those of one *asserting*, or of one *wishing*; in this manner:—Do thou therefore hear us, O Lord, because thou knowest our heart, that there is no deceit in our lips; as we pray with our lips, so do we feel in our hearts; as we teach, so do we live; whereas, on the contrary, these do nothing but dissemble.—Or, it may be understood in this manner, in a way of entreaty and wishing,—Hear righteousness, O Lord; and grant, that we may not, like those characters, both pray and teach with feigned lips. So that we see here also, that the zeal and hatred of hypocrisy shines forth: which hypocrisy all the saints pray against and attack with utter detestation.

*Ver. 2.—Let my judgment come forth from thy presence: let thine eyes behold equities.*

I do not consider that “judgment” here signifies that sense or that acuteness of mind by which we judge of all things, either well or ill, as some have thought; but I think it is that cause concerning which the adverse parties are contending, that is here signified: as we have it, Psalm cxi. 12, “I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted and the right of the poor.” And Job xxxi. 13, ‘If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me, it were a crime worthy of death.’ And as they said also to Jeremiah, xxvi. 11, ‘This crime is worthy of death.’

The sense is, therefore, Let, I pray thee, righteousness, and my cause, and my judgment, come forth from thy presence. Because I know, that before thee and in thy sight, that is just which is condemned as unjust and impious in the eyes of men. Wherefore, I pray thee, that thou wouldst reveal and make my cause to appear such in the eyes of men as it is in thy sight and in thy judgment. Let not the judgment of my cause continue such as it is when it stands in the sight of men, where it remains condemned: because as it is written Habakkuk i. 4, ‘Wrong judgment proceedeth from thence, and true judgment never goeth forth, because

the law is slacked.'—These words, therefore, ought to be used in our prayers at this day against these pretended investigators into heretical depravity, and these ecclesiastical tyrants; from whose presence true judgment never proceedeth, but the condemnation of the just cause only. And indeed, there is no other way of resisting these but by prayers of complaint and tears.

“Let thine eyes behold equities,” (or, the things that are equal.)—The Hebrew has here ‘rectitudes,’ or that which is right or straight: concerning which, we have spoken at full, Psalm ix. The prophet is here condemning these blood-thirsty hypocrites for their depravity and crooked ways: because, in every cause and case they seek their own only: and therefore, they condemn the cause of the just when they seek the things that are of God, in order that they may establish their own depravities. Thus, the Psalmist would say, The eyes of men have respect unto, and look at, their own depraved desires; but as thine eyes, O Lord, behold nothing but what is just, do thou shew forth that before the eyes of all. And this thou wilt do if thou wilt defend my cause and oppress theirs; and until thou do this, they will grow proud, and will boast without end, that thine eyes look only on them and on their depravities, as though they were ‘uprightnesses;’ and they will neglect and abominate our uprightness as if it were depravity.—The sense of this verse, indeed, is the same as that of Habakkuk i. 13, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?” Here again we see that the estimation of God and the estimation of man are two very different things; and that things are judged of differently in the eyes of God and in the eyes of men.

And we may here observe again, that, as I have often said before, we are not to strive with our own powers nor with our own wisdom. For no one ever yet overcame a perverse man by his own words or wisdom: nor did any one ever defend the cause of faith by his own powers and strength. And this is exemplified in

all heretics : for neither the prophets, nor the apostles, could overcome their hypocrites : because, these ungodly, though conquered, will not allow themselves to be conquered. What then can we worms be able to do against the Antichrists, those most powerful enemies of the church, if we omit crying and complaining unto God ?

Ver. 3.—*Thou hast proved mine heart: thou hast visited me in the night: thou hast tried me with fire, and iniquity was not found in me :*

Ver. 4.—*That my mouth might not speak the works of men; because of the words of thy lips, I have kept the hard ways.*

The Hebrew is not very different from this ; which Hieronymus renders in this way, ‘ Thou hast proved my heart, thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast smelted me (as gold) : thou hast not found my thoughts to pass my mouth. As to the works of men, because of the words of thy lips, I have observed the ways of the destroyer.’ And, though our translation abounds in its sense and words in the rendering, yet, we shall see how far it accords with the Hebrew. Not that I consider that it is therefore to be condemned, or that I wish that the church should be reproached for having used this translation so long a time. For what harm is it, if the native Hebrew sense be preserved, that it is rendered in awkward and ill-adapted words, if those words be pure and preserve the genuine sense in the church. For there are many things that have been most excellently rendered, and yet the church has not arrived at the full sense and meaning of them,—such as many of the prophecies concerning Christ, and many parts of the Apostles which foretel of things that shall happen in the last times. Who in the church understands all these ? And yet, the words are correctly rendered. Nay, who doubts that the church possesses the true meaning of this passage ? And this happens in many other passages also. But, what has not that man who has the Spirit of Christ ? And yet it is not necessary that that man should know every passage which that Spirit has recorded in the scriptures !

These things I say, in order to meet and oppose those morose ones, who, the moment they find that any thing is, in its true meaning, contrary to that which has hitherto been received in the church, cast a slur upon, and reproach the church. But *we* praise the industrious labours of others : and yet, we ought to think also that we are called to do our part towards the cultivation of the Lord's field, and not to devour the fruits of it only. For it is written in the proverb, ' When the new branches of trees are grown up, the old ones must be cast away.' Our predecessors could not do all things ; and therefore, many things were left for us to do. For, if their having taught what they did was enough, why is it not enough for us that they lived well also ? If the same words are sufficient, why are not the same works sufficient also ? and thus, why should we not be content, both with their words and their works ?—and if this be the case, let no one teach any more, nor work any more, than Hieronymus taught and wrought !

But let us return to the Psalm.—You may render these two verses in this way, word for word from the Hebrew :

Ver. 3.—*Thou hast proved my heart, thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast smelted me (as gold), thou shalt not find. My mouth shall not transgress my thoughts.*

Ver. 4.—*As to the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have observed the ways of the destroyer.*

Now, (to refer to the preceding verse,) he had there begged of the Lord, that he would judge his judgment and his cause, and would look upon his uprightness (or straightness) of walk. And now he shews with what confidence it is that he now dares to pray thus : ' Thou hast tried me in various ways (says he) and hast proved me, that thou mightest know whether there were any wicked way in me, (as he says also, Psalm cxxxix. ;) or whether I seek my own ; as it is written in the law of Moses, Exod. xvi. 4, " That I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no." And again, Deut.

viii. 3, 'The Lord led thee in the wilderness forty years to humble thee, and to prove thee.'—And yet (saith David) "thou hast found nothing," but I have continued in all things upright before thee, always seeking the things that are thine. Let, therefore, thine eyes condescend to look upon this uprightness, (or straightness); and do thou judge my cause according as it is in thy sight: for all these my enemies, who were never tried nor proved, condemn and persecute me and my cause, for no other reason, than because they do not understand it, being blinded and perverted by their own depravity.

And this abundance of expression in his prayer, 'Thou hast proved my heart,' 'thou hast visited me in the night,' 'thou hast smelted me (as gold),' does not only signify the temptations of various kinds, but has a peculiar emphasis, and evinces the extent of his feeling; shewing that he was a man that had confidence in God from a pure conscience, having been proved by a long series of temptations, and being now past the possibility of being confounded in his hope, (as we have it expressed Rom. v. ;) and one, who, being wearied by the continued attacks of the adverse party pertinaciously endeavouring to establish their cause against him, and seducing also many thereby, at length begins to justify his cause against them before God, with confidence; saying, 'Behold, thou knowest, O Lord, that all that I have said and done was right before thee; and yet, these ungodly ones, as if all that I had done was condemned by thee, despise me, and deceive many by their depravities.' And Jeremiah experienced the same things to be practised against himself: and therefore he says, xvii. 16, "As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee." And then, ver. 17, "Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil."

But as all seem to pass by this verse, as to its peculiar and especial signification, I will see what I can find



in it, and will bring forward my thoughts upon it, to serve until some one else shall have brought forward something better.

The first part of it, "Thou hast proved my heart," seems to me to have reference to those temptations with which a man is exercised in himself: that is, the want of necessaries, sickness, and other inconveniences of the body, and temporal perils. For here, the man is tried; and it is proved, whether or not he has more trust in God than in his gold, or any other good fortune, (as it is called.)

The second part is, "Thou hast visited me in the night." This represents those spiritual temptations with which the man is exercised in sins, in his conscience, in the fear of death, and in the dread of hell: that it may be proved, whether he will trust more in his own works, wisdom, and counsels, than in the pure mercy of God. For we have said in the preceding Psalm, that the night is a fit time for these temptations; in which it is properly God himself that visits us, and severely tries and proves us.

The third part is, "Thou hast smelted me (as gold);" or 'thou hast tried me in the fire, as gold is tried.' This hath reference to the external persecution; where the man is defamed by virulent tongues, and loaded with the most opprobrious names, and with ignominy; (even as Christ, when upon the cross, was numbered with the transgressors, and deemed, before men, worthy to suffer every punishment.) And the man is thus tried, that, being thus purged and proved, he might attain unto that hope which maketh not ashamed, and which enables him to dare, with confidence in God, to justify himself in the cause of the Word and of faith against all proud hypocrites, though he cannot boast of righteousness and of a perfect experience of the Word and of faith. For the cause of faith is always just and right, whether the man be a guilty sinner, or perfect, who exercises it.

"Thou shalt not find." This is the whole of the middle of the verse; but to this our translator adds

“in me,” and he adds out of the other part of the verse “iniquity” also; with a true sense, indeed, but with a confused arrangement and punctuation. For the same word signifies “iniquity,” and ‘thought,’ and ‘that intention or counsel by which we determine any thing in our hearts:’ as in Psalm x. “They are taken in the devices which they have imagined.”—It may, therefore, be said, that this prayer is elliptical, (that is, where something must be understood which is not expressed.) Thus, “Thou shalt not find:” that is, Thou shalt not find in me any way of depravity or crookedness: according to that of Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24, “Search me, O Lord, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” For God therefore tries the heart, to see if there be any wicked way in it; and this the Psalmist says was not found in him.—And now, in the following part, he fills up this ellipsis.

“My mouth shall not transgress my thoughts.”—Here, I cannot imagine, why our translator put, instead of “my mouth shall not transgress,” “my mouth shall not speak,” adding to that also, “the works of men,” from the beginning of the following verse. And although, as to myself, I do not remember to have read this kind of expression any where in the scriptures, about ‘the mouth transgressing the thoughts,’ yet, I think the sense is the same as that which is contained in the first verse, “which goeth not out of feigned lips.” For the mouth transgresses or outruns the thoughts, when it speaks above, or more than the thoughts of the heart, or what the heart thinks; so that the heart and the mouth do not agree together. And this particularly applies to vain-talkers and much-speakers, who beguile the minds of men; and who, that they might not endure the cross, teach any thing, that they may thereby please men. For they wish for the days of men, and desire to please men, and those who, from the fear of persecution, or the hope of profit, deny the truth; for they are found among these. And although their heart knows that matters are otherwise, yet their mouth transgresses the

thoughts of their heart, that they may not be brought to suffer the cross : and a great part of them also connive at, and say nothing about, these things. Hence, it of necessity follows, that a man must either perish if he contradicts, or offend God if he does not contradict, the traditions and works of men.—The other verse is,—

*In the works of men ; by the word of thy lips I have observed the ways of the destroyer.*

The word PAREZ, which our translator renders “hard,” and which Hieronymus has rendered ‘of the destroyer,’ comes from the verb PAREZ, which signifies ‘to destroy,’ ‘to divide,’ and to ‘break asunder.’ And hence, Reuchlin says, that instead of “hard,” we ought to render it ‘destroyed.’

This destroyer, therefore, is a wicked teacher, who teaches the works of men, by which the soul is corrupted, destroyed, and divided into an infinite number of ways and paths. Hence, Paul saith, “be not carried to and fro by every wind of doctrine.” Ephes. iv. And again, Heb. xiii. 9, “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace ; not with meats, which have not profited them which have been occupied therein.” And, I pray you, what is it but being torn, and distracted, and divided into an infinite number of ways, if, omitting and setting aside the unity of the faith, we are given over to the works of men, now to follow this, and now that, and now something else, without end?

Of this kind are all our ceremonies at this day, which are daily increased,—such as newly-thought-of statutes, rites, places, feasts, decorations, fraternities, and prayers, and all such things as numerous as the sand upon the sea-shore. So that if we ourselves wished to find out some name whereby to designate these teachers, we should never be able to find one more appropriate than PARIZIM, destroyers, cut-throats, ruffians, who, despising the right and public way, lurk about in their own ways, and are destroyers ; or, as Christ and Paul denominate them, “ravens wolves,” who tear us away from faith

in Christ, and distract us into so many sects, that no one can number them.

The sense is, therefore, As to the works of men, which are pretended to be taught by the word of thy lips, (since no such thing is taught by thy lips,) I have so conducted myself, as to observe those ways of these ravening wolves and ruffians that I might not walk in them. And indeed, there is the greatest observation here necessary, because we are very liable to fall into this destruction and rapacity, on account of the words of God, which they wrest and apply to the establishment of their own purposes. And this is what Isaiah sets forth most beautifully and copiously, chap. xxviii. 13, “ But the word of the Lord (behold ! these are God’s own words used !) was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept ; line upon line, line upon line ; here a little, and there a little : that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken ! ” And so also, 2 Pet. ii. 2, ‘ Who through covetousness shall with feigned words make merchandise of you ; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.’

We have here a Hebraism and an ellipsis, where some *relative* and *verb* are omitted ; which should be supplied thus, ‘ As to the works of men which they teach in the word of thy lips.’ As if he had said, I see that while they lead us to the works of men, which they lyingly say are commanded in thy word, they draw us away into the ways of their rapacity.—For David is here cutting at their feignedness : because they do not simply say by ‘ thy word,’ but by “ the word of thy lips,” are we drawn away into the works of men. For, in truth, they lay hold of the words of God without any judgment, not according to their sense, but according to the mere sound of the words, and they bend them and wrest them to their own feelings just as they please, as may be seen in their ‘ Judicial power,’ and in their ‘ Graduating and qualifying Theology.’

And I will, at the same time, here make a remark upon the Hebrew word *SCHAMAR*, and observe, that it is

a generic term and equivalent to 'guard;' that is, that 'guard' by which any thing is preserved, (as we have it in the first verse;) or, that 'guard' by which we stoop to observe any thing, (as we have it in the present verse;) which would be more properly rendered in Latin by *observare*, than by *custodire*, or *conservare*; for to observe (*observare*) may be taken in either signification.

Ver. 5.—*Perfect my goings in thy ways, that my footsteps be not moved.*

Hieronymus has it better, 'Hold up my goings:' because, that is, that craft of Satan whereby he corrupted Eve, can be guarded against by no powers; nay it corrupts our minds from the simplicity which is in Christ, unless the Lord hold up our goings, being called upon by humble prayer. Free-will, therefore, can do nothing here: nor is first grace (as we now talk) sufficient: we have need of perseverance; which is not in the power of the will of man, but effected by an upholding God only.—And observe the emphasis of expression here: for it requires more power to "perfect," than to 'begin;' for the power of the divine hand is necessary to support those who persevere—for many begin, but few proceed, and fewer still arrive at perfection; as Christ has taught us in the gospel, by the parable of seed cast into the ground. Thus Moses also began to pray with uplifted hands, but being "heavy" with persevering he had need of supporters, Aaron and Hur. For "He that will persevere unto the end, the same shall be saved." And what is perseverance but the continual and unwearied beginning of one standing against the devil and the sins of wearied nature.

"In thy ways." We have shewn sufficiently before that these "ways" are called "*thy ways*," in contrariety to all the ways of men. For we are all more ready to do those things which we have chosen ourselves, or which men have taught us, than those which God has commanded. Because, in the commandments of men, nature remains untouched, and the "old man" remains unmolested: nay, the "old man" is only nourished and

fed by the commandments of men; but, by the commandments of God, he must of necessity be mortified and changed. A man in his own "ways" will not choose or follow any thing that is contrary to his inclinations or his natural sense: but he cannot walk in the commandments of God, unless he do and suffer many things which he would not if he could help it, and which he shuns, hates, and will not receive. And here it is that the old man is put off and the new man is put on.

"That my footsteps be not moved."—This conjunction "*that*" is not in the Hebrew, but seems to be redundant: because 'for the goings to be held up,' and 'for the footsteps not to be moved,' is the same thing. But this is a confession of David; saying, that the goings or footsteps of all men are moved, that is, are rendered unstable, and are led away into the different paths of the destroyer, unless they be kept in the ways of God. Thus, they also are moved who are driven to and fro like a reed by the traditions of men: and this the experience of all of those proves, who attempt to give themselves quiet and peace by their own works, always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth, and yet, retaining the form of godliness.

And there is another peril of perseverance more terrible still, on the other side, that is, 'on the right hand;' which is the very prosperity, and security, and peace of the ungodly: concerning which, it is said Psalm lxxiii. 2—5, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." Here, in truth, ten thousands fall on the right hand; whereas, under other temptations, scarcely a thousand fall on the left side. For David is not here, nor Asaph in the cited passage, speaking of the prosperity of those ungodly, who are prosperous and secure, in the grosser sins of lust, gluttony, luxury, wealth, &c.; for such do not deceive any but those who voluntarily and knowingly

follow them : but they are speaking of those hypocrites, who, shining before men in a showy appearance of works, and being vexed by no cross, seem to pass a very excellent life ; and they fit the words of the lips of God to their own works. And just such as this is the life of the popes, priests, and religious ones. From these no one can be sufficiently safe : and by these, even the very elect, if it were possible, would be deceived. For by this kind of life, the Pope and bishops are become the lords of the whole world, and all the rest of the clergy and religious ones flatter them as much as lies in their power.

In all these things, we see not one particle of the cross of Christ, nor of true piety : nay, all these are above all men the greatest enemies to the cross of Christ : and yet, they have the name and reputation of being godly, and that, merely on account of the works of men. For we poor insensible creatures think, that, because they prosper in their ways, and so much so as even to humble great kings, and to condemn every one that is good and learned, all that they do is from God. Whereas, all that prosperity proceeds only from the working of error, which was foretold by the Apostle. Here, therefore, with a witness, is the vortex and open mouth of hell. And it is against this vortex and gate that the prophets inveigh with so much warmth and zeal. And therefore, the Psalmist proceeds with the subject which he began thus,

Ver. 6.—*I have called, for thou hast heard me, O God : incline thine ear and hear my words.*

Our translator and other authors omit the pronouns ‘ upon thee,’ and ‘ unto me.’ And hence, Hieronymus renders it better, ‘ I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God ; incline thine ear unto me and hear my speech.’ Here he begins with gratitude, and with the confession of his prayers, having been heard afore-time : thereby assuring himself of the good-will of God, and conceiving a confidence to pray again. Because, as we shall see, the man who is moved with the magnitude

and multitude of destroyers and wolves whom he desires to resist, and the many souls whom he desires to save, and yet cannot, will be filled with instant and urging prayer. As if he had said with a certain ardent and overpowering indignation, Behold, thou hast heard me oftentimes before when I cried unto thee: and now I pray again. Incline thine ear now, therefore, and hear my words, when I call upon thee for so many, great, and necessary things, in defence of so many thousands who are perishing, and against so many snares of those who are destroying them.

Nor is it of any consequence that the Hebrew has it in the future, "Thou wilt hear me, O God," and our translator, in the perfect, 'Thou hast heard me, O God:' because, according to the mode of speaking among the prophets, they always embrace both the future and the perfect. And the sense seems to be the same as it would be if we were to say, I feel a confidence that I shall not call in vain, because I know that (such is thy clemency) thou always deignest to hear me. The Hebrew has not a subjunctive mood, but always uses the future indicative for it. In this same manner it was that Christ said, John xi. 41, 42, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." And here is solved that difficulty, which Augustine always seems to find, in those cases where it seems to be a general expression, 'Thou hast heard me because I have called unto thee:' but it is much more beautifully rendered, 'I have called unto thee because thou hearest me;' thereby recommending and setting forth the mercy of God, whether he promises, or whether he hears our prayers: which moves us and affords us a plea for taking courage to call upon him; which is much more right than to make the calling of the supplicant a plea why he should be heard.

Incline thine ear, is a figurative expression very commonly used in the Psalms; whereby, as we have said before, both the humility of the supplicant, and the majesty of the prayer-hearing God, are expressively set forth; for it represents the highness of God's majesty



bending down from heaven to earth to regard the humble: that is, that he inclines his ears unto the prayers of the humble, and therefore, without doubt, turns away his face from the proud.

*Ver. 7.—Shew marvellously thy loving-kindness, O thou that savest them that hope in thee, from them that rise up against thy right hand.*

*Ver. 8.—Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.*

The Hebrew here says with much more fulness and energy, MOSCHIA HOSIM, 'The Saviour of them that trust' (or hope) absolutely: and not 'that savest them that hope in thee:' for "in thee" is added by the translator.—Behold, therefore, the force and power of this prayer in every word of it, with what an intenseness of feeling, and with what concern he plies and urges his prayer.

First he says "shew marvellously," not 'shew' only. That is, let all see how great thy loving-kindnesses are. And and how are these to be seen and known? The Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. i. 26—29, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." And again, the same Apostle saith, 1 Tim. i. 15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." For these are the wonderful and marvellous things of God's mercy, that he saves sinners that deserved damnation, and exalts to glory the unworthy who deserved nothing but to be eternally despised; and, in a word, that he exalts the humble, the mean, and the vile. And this know-

ledge, when possessed, is sweet, fills the heart with the Holy Spirit, and gladdens it and comforts it.

“Thy loving-kindnesses” (or ‘mercies.’) He does not say ‘Their righteousness, or power, or wisdom.’ Thus he said in the preceding Psalm, “I will not gather together their assemblies of blood,” &c. And this is not only marvellous and sweet in our eyes, but irritating and considered condemnable in the eyes of the ungodly; for they will not be accounted fools, sinners, and evil. And, therefore, they cannot endure to have their wisdom, power, and righteousness condemned; and hence also, they cannot bear to hear the mercies and loving-kindnesses of God proclaimed. Wherefore, they always resist God, whom they boast of being the God of the righteous only, and who will only save the righteous, and only condemn sinners. Nor do such ever come to an understanding of what sin is, or what righteousness, or God, or the mercy of God is; and of such a cast is all our school divinity; that is, impious, ignorant, erroneous, and delusive. For God does not save feigned but real sinners; because his mercy is not feigned but real mercy; he does not deal with us in words but in realities: for he is made righteous who, in truth, knows and feels himself to be a sinner: as Paul saith, 1 Tim. i. 15, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of whom (says he) I am chief.”

“The Saviour of those that trust, (or hope.)” Here, he beautifully puts God in remembrance of his work and his glory. For his work is to save those that trust in him; as it is said, Psalm xci. 14, “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known my name.” And Jeremiah xxxix. 16, 17, 18, “Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of

whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee; because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.”—Whom, I pray you, would not so large a promise, carrying so much majesty, and spoken to one man, not move? The Lord truly is sweet, but it is to those who experience him to be so. As his work is, therefore, so is his name; as his name is, so is his praise; as his praise is, so is his love; as his love is, so is our salvation. Hence he is not the Saviour of the self-wise, powerful, righteous, and holy, but of those that trust in him only, whoever they may be. It matters not whether thou be a sinner, a publican, a harlot, a murderer, or what sinner soever thou art; only trust in the Son and thy sins shall be forgiven thee through this thy trust and faith: nor shall thy sins only be forgiven thee, but this same trust shall be answered and followed by the love of God, which shall henceforth enable thee to avoid, overcome, and despise death and every evil.

“From them that resist thy right hand.” This is to be referred to “Saviour” in the preceding part of the clause; that is, “The Saviour of all them that trust in thee from them that resist thy right hand:” whereby he strikes especially at these adversaries, as being those whose madness does not rage against the things that be of the afflicted persons, but against those that be of God. ‘They resist thy right hand’ (says David.) Behold, therefore, what a good disputer and rhetorician these powerful exercises of mind make a man. Does not David play the rhetorician well here?—He commends his own cause in the sight of God, and procures God’s favour towards it, and then he accuses his adversaries and strikes directly at them, and renders his judge, with wonderful skill, not only well disposed towards him, but ardent and zealous for the defence of his cause; and all this he does, rhetorician-like, in very short and sententious words. Not that there is any necessity for such words in order that God may be thus moved; but the more bold and ardent our faith is, the more works God

performs through the medium of it. But I have said, that the wicked, who know not God nor his works, nor see, nor perceive that he is wonderful in working, think of him not thus, but according to their own senses; and therefore they always resist his right hand.

Almost all agree in the opinion, that by 'the arm' and "the right hand" of God, is signified the power and might of God: which is an allegory taken from the common use among men, who use their right hand, as being the most laborious and powerful organ and member of the body. Augustine, however, almost every where takes the 'right hand of God' as signifying the favour of God; which, indeed, is not altogether wide of the truth: because the right hand, or power, or might and strength of God, are the grace, the favour, and the mercy of God, whereby he saves and defends us in the face of all our enemies. Hence Isaiah, liii. 1, calls Christ the "arm of the Lord." And Psalm xcvi. 1, we have it written "His right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory." And Paul, 1 Cor. i. calls Christ "the wisdom of God and the power of God." And, Rom. i. he calls the Gospel "the power of God." In a word, the Word, which is Christ preached unto us, is that whereby, as with an invincible right hand, an immovable rock, an unshaken foundation, a corner stone, an all-victorious horn, we are saved, enabled to stand fast, are built up, are united, and overcome in all things and through all things.

Let this suffice once for all concerning the expression 'right hand of God.' For it is by nothing else than by his Word that he gives us life, quickens, begets, nourishes, trains up, exercises, defends, and preserves us and causes us to triumph in eternal life. Thus we have it written, Psalm cxviii. 16, "The right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." I know not, however, that the acceptation of Augustine will apply in all cases and in all passages: because it is said, Psalm xxi. 8, "Thine hand shall find out thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee." In which passage, it does not

seem to be taken for grace or mercy, or the Word of grace: unless you take it in that sense in which Christ says, John v. The word that I speak, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Ver. 8.—*Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings.*

This is taken out of Deut. xxxii. 10, “He led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye.” And from that same place is taken also the other clause, “Hide me under the shadow of thy wings:” for it is said in that same passage, ver. 11, “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.” And so Christ also saith, Matt. xxiii. 37, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings.”

This verse, however, contains a repetition, whereby he shews the greatness of the danger, and, with a concern of the greatest anxiety, so acts, as if it were almost impossible for him to be sufficiently guarded and protected against the snares of the ungodly: and this in truth is the case: and this we see also in the Apostles Paul and Peter, who so often speak and dwell upon the perils of human traditions; whereby they seem so to speak as if it were impossible for them to guard us enough against them. Wherefore, these words breathe the feelings of one fearing and fleeing from the greatest of perils; just as we see infant children run and shelter themselves in the parents’ bosoms, and cling round their necks with all their might when any great danger is nigh.

And this is just the feeling we ought to have towards God our Father under the fear of hypocrites and self-justifiers, of whom Christ has also commanded us to beware, that he might most carefully and intimately guard us: for these evils cannot be guarded against with sufficient caution. And we see this evil derive its origin and authority from the examples of all the godly and holy fathers. Every one thinks it most godly to follow them in their works; yet no one scarcely sees, that it is

not their works only, but their faith also, which was the fountain-spring of those works, that we ought to imitate, even though we should do works, in their kind, far different from theirs. For to imitate the works of our forefathers only, are merely heathen virtues : and hence Virgil boasts of

‘ The deeds of ancestors embossed on gold.’

And Cicero glories that he can produce numbers of such characters who abound in domestic virtues. But we Christians are rather to look at faith ; according to that of 2 Cor. iv. 13, “ We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore we speak.” And Heb. xiii. 7, “ Remember them which have rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God : whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation ; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” And the same Apostle, Heb. xi. only calls the faith of the fathers forth as the example which we are to follow. And, Rom. iv. he says, that the faith of Abraham was written for our example, that we also might believe.

If, therefore, the most holy works of the fathers are most perilous and pernicious when they are brought forward as examples to be followed, and if that faith be not taught at the same time by which they were sanctified ; what perils and evils must all those rules, and statutes, and decrees, and laws of men, introduce, which are vamped up without any examples of the fathers, merely out of men’s own brains, to the deception and delusion of the souls of men ? And hence, we here see the necessity of this all-diligent guard and protection which the Psalmist here desires, and which he seeks in so long a prayer, and with such urgency and energy of feeling ; or rather, which the whole people of God thus seek.

This expression, however, “ Keep me as the apple of the eye,” is not without its mystical signification : for faith is this “ eye,” yea, this “ apple of the eye :” and because this is so soon hurt, it is most carefully to be guarded :

for, as when the pupil of the eye is put out, the man walks in darkness; so, without faith, the man is in total darkness; as we have it, Luke xi. 34, "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thine whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness." And there is the same mystery contained in 'the shadow of thy wings:' for the two wings are the words of the Old and New Testament: and the "shadow" is the faith of God; which is the covering cloud of the spiritual soul under which it lies in safety unperceived by the ravenous vultures and false teachers.

Ver. 9.—*From the wicked that have afflicted me: my enemies have compassed about my soul.*

This verse agrees with the words that precede 'keep me, &c. hide me from the face of the wicked,' (that is, from those who are holy, righteous, and great in works, and not in faith.) Hieronymus, more correctly, instead of "have afflicted," has given, "have destroyed." For what the Psalmist is complaining of, is, that the church of God is most especially destroyed by the ungodly: as Paul confesses of himself, Gal. i. 13, "I persecuted beyond measure the church of God, and wasted it." For persecution, as it is a more manifest evil, does a less evil, than secret destruction, which is an evil that is fair in outside show, and is done under the name of the greatest good. And therefore, "afflicted" may signify that grief which the people of God feel from the secret devastation of the church of God; than which evil scarcely a greater can be found.

The Hebrew more significantly saith, 'from the face of the wicked: they have destroyed me.' As if he had said, I have fought with tyrants as with the worst of enemies, and by this I increased and was strengthened. But these wicked ones, these domestic enemies, who are wolves though they appear to be pastors, who are the ministers of Satan under the garb of angels of light, and who are the ministers of Antichrist under the colour of being ministers of Christ,—these are they, alas! who

most miserably destroy me. Here there is need of great and diligent guard : here we have to be kept as the apple of the eye : for whereas, in the former case, I conquered the tyrants and destroyed the whole world, in the latter case, I am conquered and destroyed by my own domestic enemies.

“ My enemies have compassed about my soul.” The Hebrew has no pronoun “ *my* ” before “ soul ; ” but runs thus, ‘ My enemies in soul have set themselves against me round about. ’ “ Soul ” seems to refer to the “ enemies ; ” because he adds at the end “ have set themselves against me. ” Here he shews the panting violence of the wicked, against the disciples in the faith, wherein they are mad after the defence of their own righteousnesses. For we have said, Psalm x. that to the soul are ascribed the feelings of desire and loathing, lusting and hating : as we have it, Gen. xxxiv. 8, “ The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter. ” And, on the contrary, Levit. xxvi. 30, “ And my soul shall abhor you. ” And Numb. xxi. 5, “ Our soul loatheth this light bread. ”

Therefore, the sense of this part, is, “ the enemies in soul ; ” that is, they have most eagerly and longingly surrounded my soul : as we have it, Ezekiel xxv. 15, 16, “ Thus saith the Lord God ; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred ; therefore thus saith the Lord, ” &c.

Ver. 10.—*They have enclosed their own fat, their mouth has spoken pride.*

Hieronymus translates this a little differently from the Hebrew, ‘ They have spoken proudly with their mouth, ’ but the sense is the same. But, I pray, what can this ‘ enclosing their own fat ’ mean ? We cannot understand it literally, and must therefore have recourse to allegory. We have it said, then, Psalm lxxix. 31, “ And slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. ” And he had said before this, Deut. xxxii. 15, “ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked : ”



whence it is manifest that fat signifies rich, great, and powerful, and excelling above others. And hence, Levit. iii. it is written, that all the fat should be the Lord's by a perpetual rite, and that the Jews should not eat either the fat, or the blood: whereby, perhaps, the Spirit signified, that we should neither be elated with prosperity nor cast down by adversity, nor become easy and secure by the former, nor grow angry and sorrowful by the latter, nor look up to the high ones who flatter, nor dread their terrors.

By "fat," therefore, we are to understand impious teachers, and the rich and powerful of this world. For so it is with the doctrine of ungodliness, all the greater ones of this world cleave unto it: as we have it, Habak. i. 16, 'The food of behemoth is plenteous.' Whereas, the poor and the humble cleave to the word of godliness only. And this "fat" of the ungodly, according to my judgment, may be said to be "enclosed" when the rich and the powerful conspire together, hold by each other, think the same things, and act in conjunction; just as a circle or ring is enclosed and collected into itself. This was prefigured, 1 Sam. xxxiv. where Saul and his men surrounded David about, that they might take him. And in this sense it is said, Psalm cxix. 23, "Princes also did sit and speak against me." And again, "Princes persecuted me without a cause." And Psalm liv. 3, "Oppressors seek after my soul." Of all this there are manifest examples in the church.

"They spoke pride (or proudly) with their mouth:" concerning this we have spoken, Psalm x. These characters, trusting in their fat, not only do not hear the counsel of the poor (as it is called, Psalm xiv.) but with confidence confound them, and command them to suffer a repetition of their miseries, or bid them be silent. We (say they) are the teachers of the people, we are they that teach the right things, and all others are in duty bound to obey us.

But why does David say "with their mouth;" because no one ever heard of speaking with the nose. This is to make a distinction between *their* mouth, and the

mouth of God. For he that speaks the truth, speaks with the mouth of God; and he that speaks with his own mouth, speaks lies: as Christ saith, John viii. 44, "When he speaketh a lie he speaketh his own."

Ver. 11.—*Casting me down they have now surrounded me: they have set their eyes to bow down to the earth.*

Hieronymus renders it, 'Coming against me they have now surrounded me: they have set their eyes to bow down to the earth.'—For my part, I am utterly at a loss to know what the meaning of this is: in the Hebrew there is neither 'against me,' nor "casting me down." I should render it in this manner, 'They have walked; now they have surrounded me: they have set their eyes to declinings on the earth.' And here, setting aside all the opinions of others, I will endeavour to say what I think of the passage.

After he had said that the ungodly with a burning mind laid all their plots against the people of God, and then strengthened and fortified themselves by the multitude of the great ones of this world, and spoke proudly and contemptuously of him and against the people of God, he now shews the impious security and presumption at which they arrive after all this; saying, "They have walked:" that is, they are hardened by their confidence in their own fat, and walk proudly, and securely. So that the verb "they have walked," or 'have moved along,' stands alone and is absolute; signifying, 'they are walking,' they remain securely and quietly in these their ways and counsels. Because, whatever they do themselves they consider to be right, and whatever they do not, is ungodly: and hence, they always sing their triumphal song before they have gained the victory.

"And now they have surrounded me." That is, and now they think that I am taken and conquered, even before they have taken me, so secure and certain are they.—For thus, it appears to me, that the adverb "now," is put to signify the certainty and presumption of these characters, who think always that all is over with the people of God, and that they are in despair.

For such are always the language, and thoughts, and confidence, of the wicked, when they see themselves surrounded by the multitude of the great against the few, the poor, and the humble.

“They have set their eyes to bow down to the earth.” This I would understand as spoken with reference to the respect of persons always had by these characters. So that is a complaint of the godly people against the ungodly, who so pertinaciously cleave to persons and distinctions, being high in their knowledge, and despising the humble; contrary to the command of God, *Exod. xxiii. 2*, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil: neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, to wrest judgment.” These, therefore, do not direct their “eyes” to the simple cause of truth, but make them declinable and turnable just according to the will of the great and the high who rule in the earth. The sense is, therefore, They imagine that I am now conquered, and, despising my cause, they turn themselves and direct their eyes there, where their fat is enclosed. Whatever they themselves do, that turns and carries their eyes away; this they consent to, and this they favour. And in this their way they are pertinaciously obstinate: for they are determined thus to incline and hold fast that which they themselves have fixed and resolved upon, being wholly turned away from the cause of the truth of God; and they imagine that they hereby do God service.

But David adds “to the earth:” which is not to be referred to the “eyes,” but to the cause. Hence I have rendered it, ‘to declinings on the earth;’ that is, to earthly declinings; that is, they follow the nod of the great ones on the earth; and wherever they turn and decline, there these decline and turn also to follow them; forgetting utterly the commands of God, and looking only at declinings on the earth, and following only those that follow earthly things. Therefore (says David) all advice to them is vain; it is in vain that I reason with them, it is in vain that I entreat them; they are more moved by their own fat than by my words. Wherefore,

(says he) there is nothing left me but that I flee unto thee, O Lord, who judgest rightly.

Ver. 12.—*They have surrounded me as a lion greedy of his prey; and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*

This is a manifest error in our translator: because the Hebrew has it not “And they have surrounded me,” but ‘his likeness is.’ For in this Psalm, David is not speaking of the ungodly taking him, but of their attempt to make the godly utterly extinct. Hence Hieronymus has it, ‘His likeness is that of a lion greedy of his prey, and as young lions lurking in secret places.’ And the sense is very clear; for we have it, Psalm x. 9, “He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den.” Where, as here also, David is exposing the snares and secret and cruel traps of the ungodly: for those things (as we have said above) by which the ungodly endeavour to catch the simple and the godly, are hidden under art and deceit. And this is a very apt and beautiful similitude: for as a lion sits watching that he may spring upon corporal animals and slay them: so does every false teacher, try every means, that he may entrap and destroy souls. And this verse is thus explained by Christ himself, Matt. vii. 15, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

Hence we see that this Psalm does not speak of externally persecuting tyranny; but of the persecution of the ungodly, whereby they lead aside many unto perdition. And yet, if these be resisted, they threaten, and, if they can, they murder the saints of God. But the pride and boasting of Moab are greater than his power and strength, and he attempts more than he can perform; as it is said in the scripture.

Ver. 13.—*Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, thy sword: from the enemies of thy hand.*

In my opinion there is scarcely one passage in the

whole Psalms more obscure, even in the Hebrew itself, than this : and we have the unhappiness to have a translation more obscure still, and a division of the clauses quite confused. Wherefore, let us bring this verse to the Hebrew text and division of matter. Hieronymus says it should be thus, ‘Arise, O Lord, cause me to disappoint him, break him down : save my soul from the wicked, which are thy sword.’ Hence it is manifest that “from the enemies of thy hand” should be joined to the following verse.

David says, therefore, when these rapacious wolves have tried all things and have gotten many helpers, so that it appears impossible that we few should avoid their snares, or by any means escape, we have no other remedy but to fly unto thee and lift up our eyes unto thee, that thou mayest hear us, mightest frustrate and disappoint our enemy, and render us wise and wary by thy Spirit, in order that we may escape his deadly machinations ; and that if he come upon us any where, thou mightest ward him off by our being prepared, and that we might thus triumph over him. For God does not here disappoint the wicked so as to convert him from his wickedness, but only to prevent him from harming. So also, he does not take away the scorpions and the serpents, but only enables us to tread upon them and walk over them. He does not take away the temptation, he only prevents us from falling into it. Thus the Apostle tells the Ephesians to be armed with the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, and the shoes of gospel peace.

“Save, or deliver, my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword.” This remarkable passage shews us, that heretics and false teachers are the plague of the wrath of God ; just as, of old, the material sword of the surrounding nations was the plague of the people of Israel. And therefore, this plague is to be averted more by humble prayer unto God, and God is more to be appeased in that way, than by any powers of body or of ability. We must so contend with them as to leave the victory in the hand of a merciful God, brought over to

our help by tears and prayers; and we are to commit and ascribe nothing to our own works. For it is not in our power to save our soul from these impious ones; how much less then shall it be in our power to overcome them, as David here prays, "Deliver my soul from the wicked?" But if we lay aside this humble prayer and attack them by main force, by fire, and by abuse, (as we proceed at this day,) there is no doubt but those who thus go to the attack will be worse heretics than the others, and incomparably worse than those whom they attack; because, in this way, they only fall upon the wrath of God by their own abuse, and force, and pride: than which madness what can be greater?

And only observe the terribleness of the expression. He calls the wicked "the sword" of God. For the rod is a much less infliction of wrath: because, as Solomon says, 'The rod correcteth and delivereth the soul from hell.' And it is in the greatest mercy when God says, Psalm lxxxix. "I will visit their iniquities with the rod and their transgressions with stripes." But the sword separates and kills the soul. And great is God, therefore his sword is great: and so great a sword shall destroy many and great ones.

The primitive church indeed was struck more frequently with the paternal rod, but seldom with the sword: and that persecution was, in the eyes of the flesh, most bitter and severe, but, in the eyes of God, and in truth, it was of all the most mild and gentle. After this, followed the heretical persecution, which, in the eyes of the flesh, was much more mild and gentle, but it was in truth much more bloody and injurious, because it destroyed a great many more souls: and yet, there was something of the mercy of God left, because the truth was brought to light and set forth by the fathers, who maintained the fight, and the word of God reigned in many. But in these last and worst of days, under the ecclesiastical rule, that sword of the wicked prevails and slays alone, without any to oppose it. Under this, all things appear to be quiet and peaceable, where the tyrants do not openly persecute us, and there is no

open battle with the heretics. Thus, being free from apparent persecution, we almost all perish by the sword of the wicked; not seeing that under this peace reigns a persecution of all the most terrible; where, the Word of God being extinct, we are dragged in crowds into hell by the words of men.

But, in my opinion, of all the swords of the wicked, the greatest and most destroying is the Pelagian iniquity. For it is against this, as we see, that this Psalm especially strikes, nay, the whole scripture. For what do the prophets, what do the apostles aim at, but to set up the righteousness of faith in opposition to the righteousness of men? Hence the Pelagian error is an error of almost all ages, which has often been opposed and run down, but never extinguished. All other errors almost have their day, and are eradicated in their time: but at the Pelagian error the prophets have struck, Christ has struck, and Paul has struck, nevertheless it still crept in again somewhere, until Pelagius himself was born, and raised his head, and began to defend it openly. And here again, God in pity and mercy towards us raised up Augustine, who gave it a terrible blow for the time. But after Augustine it again rose and prevailed, not only without any one to contradict it, but even with the church of Rome to support and enforce it; and with all the colleges, bishops, and princes, throughout the whole world, to teach and follow it, as being a thing most excellent and most christian-like. And though some few dared to open their mouths against it at Paris and elsewhere, yet little good was seen to be done. In a word, this error is the fountain of all idolatry: ever appearing under a different shape and face, and prevailing through a different age. For what idolaters ever existed who did not think that they pleased God by their own devoted endeavours and works? And what does the Pelagian error do but this? Therefore, rightly is Pelagius named from the sea (*pelagus*); because this error has inundated and spread itself over the whole world: the root of which is the wisdom of the flesh,

which is always at enmity against God and never subject unto him, as we have it Rom. viii.

Ver. 14.—*From the wicked of thy hand, O Lord; from a few out of the earth, divide them in their life; their belly is filled with thy hid treasure; they are full of children.*

*They leave the remainder of their substance to their babes.*

This verse is only one in the Hebrew.—We will take up this most obscure passage and pursue it as we begun, and see what we can do with it. Let us consider, first, the translations which have been given us. Out of our translation we can make nothing at all: and we can make still less of Hieronymus, who thus renders the passage: ‘From the men of thy hand, O Lord, who have died in the deep, whose portion is in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure, who shall be satisfied with children, and who will leave the remainder of their substance to their babes.’ But what, I pray you, do we here hear? Hence, I am compelled to go by a very unskilful teacher, that is, myself: and therefore, I will give mine opinion without any prejudice or temerity: let him that knows more about it than I do help me out, and let him that does not judge equally.—I would give the rendering verbatim from the Hebrew, thus:

*From the men of thy hand, O Lord; from the men of substance, whose portion is in their lives, whose belly thou shalt fill with thy hid treasure, they shall be filled children; they have left the remains of their substance to their babes.*

The first part of the verse consists of five members, the latter of one: and in these powerful words David sets forth to us what this sword of God is, from which he desires that his soul should be saved: and he describes it in *six* particulars.

The first is “From the men of thy hand, O Lord.”



which is the same as if he had said, From the lost and reprobated men who are damned to all eternity. For these are they whom he seems to understand by "The men of thy hand;" on account of that which is said, *Exod. xiv. 31*, "And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians." And *Deut. xxxii. 41*, "For if I wet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance unto mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me." And *Isaiah ix. 12*, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." And it seems to be a familiar expression with the prophet to say, 'the hand of God' for the 'vengeance of God:' as in *Psalms x. "Lift up thine hand."* And *Psalms xxi. 8*, "Thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee." And hence the Apostle, *Heb. x. 31*, thunders out these words, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Again, "From the men of substance." The sense of which is, "Deliver my soul from the men of substance:" that is, from the vilest of men who are creatures of this most short life only: that is, from the children of this most uncertain world, who have nothing but the very short substance and duration of this life, because, they are reprobated men and men of thy hand.

"Their portion is in lives." Here David says "lives" in the plural number: and he does the same in the preceding Psalm, "shew me the path of lives," which is so in the Hebrew. The sense is, therefore, Their portion and happiness are not in the life to come, but in the good things of the present: for they pass their days in good things, as Job saith: with these they are content and have no desires after the better country: they receive here their reward, because they are the men of thy hand.—He says "lives" in the plural number, because of the various ways and uses of this life. Therefore, Augustine beautifully observes, upon that passage of *Psalms lxiii. 3*, "Thy loving-kindness is better than lives."—"The lives of men (says he) are many. One

pursues the life of husbandry in the country, another a life of business in merchandise, another a life of war, and another, another kind of life. Thus, at this day, (says he) we choose out to ourselves orders and states, wherein, and according to which, we might live. But there are few who prepare themselves for death, or desire eternal life: all rather choose to remain in that state in which they now are, as if they were quite content with their portion in this life, and preferred that to dying. In which state of ignorance, are all those hypocrites who are of all men the most desirous of life, who dread death, and are unconcerned about eternal life, which was the case with the Jews in the desert.'

Is it not, therefore, a most powerful expression, when he says, that these wicked men are desirous of this most miserable life only? And in this they are content, and this they unwillingly leave. Nor is it any wonder: for they are not only destitute of that faith which overcometh sin and death, and of the mercy and loving-kindness of God which are better than life, but even fight against these things with all their might. Though, as to external appearance, these characters do nothing else but shew, that they are desirous of life, that they despise death, and that they are the elect and seeking after eternal life: but there is deceit in their spirit, for they deny all these pretences by their works.

"Thou shalt fill their bellies with thy hid treasure." What does this shew, but that they are animals of the belly only, born only to devour the fruits of the earth? For we have said, Psalms iv. v. x. and xiv. that to teachers of ungodliness, are every where attributed in the scriptures, covetousness and the feeding of the belly: concerning whom also the Apostle saith, "Whose God is their belly." But God, who hates unbelief and ungodliness, causes, in this way, his wrath to fall upon them: as we have it, Psalm lxxviii. 31. And as Paul saith, Coloss. iii. The wrath of God came upon the children of disobedience. And thus does he fill their bellies with his hid treasure; he gives them the desire of their hearts, and does not suffer them to be robbed of their

wishes ; as David saith in the same Psalm. That is, he fills their belly ; he gives them what they desire ; he gives them their reward in this life ; because they have no desire after and wait not for the life to come.

He says, “with thy hid treasures :” that is, thy reserved treasures. This is what he calls the “substance” of this world, with which God feeds men in this life. God causes this treasure to be brought forth every year, and brings it forth as it were from a “hid treasure.” For man cannot know whence it comes : nor, if he sought it, could he possibly find it, if God did not in a wonderful way give it out of these his “hidden treasures.” There is, therefore, a similar expression to this, Psalm cxxxv. 7, “Who bringeth the wind out of his treasures :” that is, from his secret resources : for the wind bloweth where it listeth, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. And it is the same with bread, wine, and all those things which we use as necessaries for this life. They all come and we use them ; but we know not whence they come.—In this expression, therefore, the Psalmist powerfully cuts at the ignorance of the ungodly ; who feel that those things which they use are not their own, nor in their own power : and yet, they do not even thus learn to trust in God.—Nay, every word of this verse, though the words are few and unfigurative, strikes powerfully at the ignorance of the ungodly. All things are most appropriately, most fully, and effectually spoken, if they be weighed with a prudent heart.

“They shall be satisfied with children.” That is, they shall have an abundant offspring : for these things are what they seek after among other things,—to have fair, fruitful, and rich wives, and sons and daughters handsome and praised on all sides, that they may have all they desire, and that the prosperity of their children may fulfil all their wishes. For the verb “shall be satisfied” does not apply to the number of the offspring only, but, more especially, to their condition ; that they may have them opulent, honourable, full of pleasures, and partakers of all the pomp of this world. For these

are the desires that we see in all parents: and therefore David says that the same reigned in all the wicked parents of his day. And hence Paul saith in a very brief way, Philip. iii. 'I tell you weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ; whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.'

"And they have left the remains of their substance to their babes." That is, they are ever thinking how much of that abundance (which they have in a superfluity, for they are not content with necessaries only,) they may store and lay up, and leave to their heirs, merely that their children after them may be opulent and abound in all pleasures. And thus, our bishops and clericals do nothing but strive to increase the wealth of Christ (as they call it) that they may leave it increased after them. And none do this so much as the best and most godly among them, that is, the most ungodly. For, in the present day, to rule the church well, is to increase ecclesiastical wealth well, and build profusely.

And "the remains," in this passage, signifies the superfluities which are over and above what they can consume. We are to observe this, that we may not understand it as signifying the remnant of any small property which is left, when all the best of it is spent and consumed. Hence, the word in the Hebrew is derived from a verb which signifies excelling and abounding.

And this "have left," instead of 'laid up,' shews that they heaped up all these riches and superfluities on purpose to leave them to their children.

Ver. 15.—*But I shall appear in righteousness in thy sight: I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.*

Hieronymus more rightly renders it, 'But I shall see thy face in righteousness, when I shall awake in thy likeness.' David opposes these things to those which he had said of the ungodly. *They* savour of earthly things, *they* are satisfied with children, and have and place all their portion in this life. But as for me, (says

David) I despise this life, and I press forward into the life which is to come, where I shall see thee, not in riches, but in righteousness; and shall behold, not these earthly and perishable things, but thy face. Nor shall I be satisfied with children of the flesh, but, I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in thy likeness: as it is written, 1 John iii. "But this we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him." So that, "in thy likeness," does not refer to "shall awake," but to "shall be satisfied:" for we shall be satisfied when the face of God is revealed, which is his brightness and his glory.

And David here beautifully uses a word which has reference to the resurrection, "when I shall awake;" that is, from the sleep of death: so that, he shews thereby, that our satiety is to be, not in this world, but in that which is to come.—Though there is nothing in our translation which disagrees with the Hebrew; for "the glory of God" will "appear" when we arise from the sleep of death, and shall be made like unto him. But the Hebrew points out the resurrection more clearly than our translation.

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## PSALM XVIII.

### TO VICTORY.

A PSALM OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD, WHO SPAKE UNTO THE LORD THE WORDS OF THIS SONG, IN THE DAY THAT THE LORD DELIVERED HIM FROM THE HAND OF ALL HIS ENEMIES, AND FROM THE HAND OF SAUL: AND HE SAID,

Ver: 1.—*I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.*

THERE are many things in this Psalm which compel us to understand it of Christ, and many which constrain us to understand it of David; nor have I, as to

myself, been enabled, as yet, to determine which understanding of it is the more true and certain; and I cannot, without danger, determine upon either. Augustine freely declares that it is concerning Christ and his body; that is, the church; and as such he treats it. And Paul, Rom. xv. 9, seems to accord with this acceptation, where he introduces the last verse but one of this Psalm as referring to Christ, "For this cause will I confess to thee among the gentiles, and sing unto thy name." We will therefore here follow the Apostle, because it is more safe to enlarge upon all the contents in reference to Christ himself, than in reference to the disciple David; and to receive the real circumstances, which are mentioned in it, in a figurative way. For there is no doubt that the wars, victories, and sufferings of David prefigured the suffering and resurrection of Christ. Because Augustine saith, 'Whatever things which are spoken in this Psalm will not apply to the Lord properly, are to be applied to the church.' For it is all Christ that here speaks, in whom all the members are joined together.

I should think, therefore, that David, while he was giving thanks for his own victories, delivered, at the same time, a prophecy concerning Christ, victorious over the world, sin, and death. So that we may understand the title thus, "Who spake unto the Lord the words of this song:" that is, who delivered this prophecy concerning Christ to come: and delivered it in that day on which he gained the victory over all his enemies, and enjoyed a life of peace. Hence, the whole Psalm contains the words of Christ rising from the dead. And this intent of his Psalm he seems to intimate when he mentions Saul as the last enemy, who was, in truth, the first enemy of David: for by this contrariety of order he would intimate, that he did not speak of his own victories, but of the victories of Christ.

Ver. 1.—*I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.*

These are the words of one rising up again, and of one who has experienced the power of God in tribula-

tion. For it is thus that we are accustomed to enlarge sweetly and exultingly upon the praises of those to whose benefits and help we know that we are indebted for our deliverance from any particular dangers. For it is the purity of love that is evidenced, when he says, "*thee, O Lord,*" not any creature: upon which we have spoken at length, Psalm v.

Ver. 2.—*The Lord is my foundation, and my refuge, and my deliverer; my God, my helper, in him I will hope; my protector, the horn of my salvation, and he that undertaketh for me.*

All this is one verse in the Hebrew. Hieronymus renders the whole thus, 'The Lord is my rock and my strength, and my Saviour, my God, my strong one; and in him will I hope; my shield, the horn of my salvation, and he that undertaketh for me.' And he has translated the same Song, 2 Sam. xxii. in the same way, excepting that, instead of "he that undertaketh for me," he has there rendered it "my lifter up." But who can with sufficient force, fulness, and propriety, render these most powerful expressions: for the Holy Spirit is not careless and inattentive in his words and expressions, so as to permit any particle to be superfluous. I, as I have said before, entirely fall under the powerful language and the full understanding of this Psalm, conscious that I cannot come up to them: and all others have either said nothing about it to the purpose, (or else I cannot understand them and the Psalm,) for they have not yet rendered me any assistance upon it. But I must go on, and leave to every one his liberty of expressing himself upon it in the best manner he can.

"My strength," which we have in the first verse, seems to me to mean that strength whereby a man is strengthened and comforted within, being endued with power from on high: as we have it, Psalm cxlvii. 13, "For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates." And Isaiah liv. 2, "and strengthen thy stakes." So that it signifies that strength which gives power to weak and feeble minds: which strength can be obtained no where

but from God: for, of ourselves, we are most easily dissolved both by adversity and by prosperity, and melt under each like wax before the sun.

“ My foundation,” which, according to the Hebrew, is “ rock.” The foundation on which any edifice is built is the chief stone. Hence we have it, Matt. xvi. “ Upon this rock will I build my church.” And thus the Lord not only endues Christ and his followers with internal strength and support, but is himself their foundation upon which they are built, and upon which they rest, as the solid building rests upon the solid rock.

“ My refuge,” or, ‘ my strength.’ The original word signifies properly a citadel, tower, or house of refuge, or a fortified place: as in Psalm xxxi. 2, “ Be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.” So that, comparing this with the foregoing expression, we find him to say, The Lord is not only a foundation and firm rock, but also the house of defence itself built on the rock, preserving and defending him that fleeth unto it.

“ My deliverer:” which properly signifies ‘ a way of escape,’ and that strength by which any is delivered and enabled to escape when surrounded and straitened with difficulties; as the Israelites escaped from Pharaoh.

“ My helper,” or ‘ my strong one:’ and this also in the Hebrew, signifies a rock or a flint: it is frequently rendered ‘ strong,’ or ‘ strong one.’ It signifies that strength by which a man escaping, and having fled into the house of refuge, there remains, and is preserved in security safe from all the attacks of his pursuers.

All these *five* particulars have reference to *passive strength*, and to the enduring of evils. For the first thing is the having strength within; and then, that this strength may not fail when attacked, but have a rock on which it might lean for support and stand firm; and afterwards, that it may not be overcome by numbers, but have a fortified place into which it might betake itself; and then, again, that it might have a place of escape when shut in and oppressed in straits; and lastly, that it may be strengthened with the power and strength



of perseverance, that it yield not to weariness of the unceasing conflict, which is the ultimate aim of men and devils.

There now follows the *active* and propulsive strength. And the first particular here is "My shield."—He that is about to suffer the attack of enemies has need to be defended with a shield, whereon he might receive all the fiery darts of the enemy, and penetrate through and slay: for he does not want a shield who flees for refuge.

"The horn of my salvation." This is the strength itself which fights and overcomes: which appears to me to be the power of the Word or the confidence of preaching and proclaiming. Thus it is said, Micah iv. 13, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." And, that 'threshing' is the same as preaching, is proved by the Apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 9, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." And what are the 'horn of iron,' and the 'hoofs of brass,' but that word of Christ, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist?" And therefore it is called "the horn of salvation," because it overcomes the enemies and procures salvation from the adversaries. But there are some that by "horn" understand a kingdom: nor is that very dissonant from the truth: for the kingdom of Christ stands only in the word of truth: and this is indeed the kingdom of salvation, because it overcomes all things.

"Thou art he that undertaketh for 'me,' or 'my lifter up:' that is, he in whom I am so lifted up above mine enemies, as to triumph over them: as Paul saith, "Who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." And in this way it is said, Isaiah vii. 'And the Lord shall lift up the enemies of Rezin over him.' And we see how marvellous the power of Christ and of his saints is!

Here, therefore, we have, first, the *passive* power, and that perfects the *active*; as Paul saith, 'strength is

made perfect in weakness.' And hence, the world is conquered by no other arms, than patience and the Word of God : as it is said, Isaiah xiv. 2, "And they shall take them captives whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors." And Joel iii. 10, "Let the weak say, I am strong." And 2 Sam. xxii. there is added to this verse, "My refuge and my Saviour, thou savest me from violence : " and I know not why it is omitted in this Psalm.

Ver. 3.—*I will call upon the Lord praising, and I shall be saved from mine enemies.*

Where is now the title which says that this Psalm was only a song sung by David when he was delivered from all his enemies? Certainly we cannot say any thing else here, than that which Augustine thinks,—that it is the whole of Christ, that is, Christ with his whole body, that is speaking; and that he is speaking for his body, which is the church, which always conquers, and always fights, and, when the past evils are overcome, is the more prepared to overcome the evils that may follow. Or, if we confine this to the person of Christ, we must understand all these things as said as representing the greatness of the mind and feelings of Christ toward God; wherein he evinces the readiness of his mind to have done even more than he did, if it had been required: as it is written, Psalm cviii. 1, 'O God, my heart is ready, my heart is ready.' And Psalm xxvi. 2, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." And thus also the man who is delivered from evils, and has experienced the divine power, desires nothing else than to suffer again, that he might again experience the same power of God: and there is begotten, out of this, a certain wonderful thirst for suffering, and an inestimable confidence in the sweetness of God.—And, "all things are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Here, therefore, David has set before us the *fivefold* strength of those that *suffer*, and the *threefold* strength

of those that *fight*: that he may instruct us, and teach us, that there is nothing so evil, so great, so much, so powerful, or so long, which may not be overcome by the power of God, if we fully trust in it; and, that the time for hoping, is, especially, that time when many, great, powerful, and continual evils rush in upon us; because, it is the peculiar property of the power of God to help the weak, the few, the small, the helpless, and the fearful, not only in the evils of punishment, but in the evils of the sins themselves. For what display of divine power in us would that be, which should only help us to bear the punishment of our sins, and should not overcome the sins themselves in us? So full of consolation is this passage! For, to nature, the contrary appears to be the case: all appears there to be desperation and hopelessness, when evils, and not only so, but great, and many, and powerful, and protracted evils, rush in upon us. And we see in the apostles, that, after they were endued with power from on high, not only these evils rose up against them, but many, and great, and powerful ones started up to hurt them, and those also obstinate and persevering ones: as we have it, Psalm cxxix. 8, "The ploughers ploughed upon my back, they made long their furrows."

And it is in the same manner that Satan works in every man, in every private temptation of lust, wrath, pride, covetousness, and every other evil. For, wherever he finds a determination in a man to follow after chastity and purity, he not only raises up wrath and lust against such an one, but sets before him various kinds of cogitations, and then magnifies them, and, with wonderful craft, renders them effectual to the throwing of the man down. And at length, he often overcomes that man by assiduity and continual wearying, whom he could not overcome by multitude, nor by magnitude, nor by any other efficacy; and he then throws them down when they are thus worn out.

O fools, and rash boasters of *free-will* and *elicited acts*, that men are, who believe that Satan is asleep, and who learn not to comprehend his thoughts discovered to

us by these places of the scriptures, and to provide against them ; and who securely presume that they shall be saved by good actions alone, without any fighting. Not so, ye ungodly, not so ! The enemy is ever at the door, great, powerful, having many ways, very mighty, and indefatigable ; whose single attacks (to say nothing about his magnitude, his multitude, his strength, his perseverance,) we are not able to withstand, unless the Lord be our strength ; because we ourselves all the while, without any attack from the enemy, are prone to every evil.

But by what way or art shall it be brought about that the Lord shall be our strength, our foundation, our refuge, our deliverer, and our helper, in this hostile multitude, of great, powerful, and persevering ones ? David answers, it will thus come to pass, If thou call upon the Lord praising : for by this ‘ praising prayer,’ thou shalt be saved from all thine enemies : as it is said, Rom. x. from Joel ii. “ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” And again, Prov. xviii. “ The name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it and is safe.” This indeed is of all doctrines the most noble, and altogether a golden doctrine in tribulation ; it is the best of all counsels, and whereby we may be delivered from all evils,—if, under tribulation, we are enabled to justify God, to bless him, and to proclaim him, according to that example of the three children ; and Dan. ix. 7, “ O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces as at this day.” It is inconceivable how efficacious this praising of God is, and how powerful a remedy it is in all times of peril : for as soon as ever you thus begin to praise God, the evil becomes lighter, trust in God increases, and upon this immediately follows calling upon him with confidence.

Let all the servants of God, therefore, see that they attempt not to get consolation or to overcome their evils in any other way, or by any others means, than what is here prescribed in this verse. Call not upon God first ; but first praise him and then call upon him.

For there are some who call upon him and are not heard: as we have it in this same Psalm a little below, ver. 41, "They cried but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but he answered them not." And why?—because they called not upon him with feelings of praise, but with feelings of indignation: they set not before them the sweetness of the Lord, but considered and were wrapt up in their own bitterness. But no one is ever delivered from evils by looking at, and dwelling in bitterness upon, those evils; he overcomes them only by cleaving close to God and looking at his goodness: as we have seen, Psalm xvi. 8, "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." O deep and rare counsel, and hard to attain unto!—to set before one's self a sweet and praise-deserving Lord, in the midst of evils and dangers; and to look to an absent and incomprehensible God, with more steadfastness than at present evils, and even when those evils are all the while hindering our thus looking at God! I cannot find it in my power to set forth and commend worthily the grace and virtue contained in this short but excellent verse, and which are conveyed in such appropriate words, and so expressively arranged.

But, they who do not begin conquering with this praising of the Lord, but look at the consolations of men, or turn aside to their own merits, and who do not lay hold of the hope of a better life to come, will never be overcomers; for the matter is fixed,—He that prayeth praising, shall be delivered from his enemies, and no other. Thus it is written, Isaiah xlvi. 9, "I will restrain thy mouth with my praise, that thou perish not." And Isaiah l. 4, "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."—It is on this account that the second commandment is given us, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." It is to this end also that we pray 'Hallowed be thy name.' And it is for this, that the present Psalm begins with so many praises of God, and glories

in the love of God. So that David seems in this verse to give a reason *why* he so glories and hopes in the Lord. As if he had said, It is in this way that we ought always to begin to call upon the name of the Lord, commencing with a feeling love towards him.

Only let any one try this : let him apprehend some praise of God, when he is in distress, and he shall presently feel a relief and an easement. Every other consolation but this, either does not profit at all, or else profits falsely and deceivingly : that is, in truth, it does injury.—So great is the power and blessing of the name of the Lord. I confess that I have often unburdened my heart from heaviness in this way.

Ver. 4.—*The sorrows of death compassed me round about ; the floods of iniquity made me afraid.*

Hieronymus renders it, ‘ The lines (or cords) of death compassed me about ; the floods of Belial made me afraid.’ In 2 Sam. xxii. the Hebrew word which Hieronymus here renders ‘ cords,’ is different from what it is here : and which Hieronymus there renders ‘ the bruising.’ But Reuchlin seems to me to be correct here, who renders it ‘ gatherings together,’ or ‘ heaps,’ instead of ‘ cords :’ as we have it, 1 Sam. x. “ Thou shalt meet a company of the prophets.” So that the sense of the passage is, Death with many and great forces compassed me about. And thus ‘ the forces of death’ are joined with ‘ the floods of Belial’ in the latter part of the verse. So that, by both expressions, he sets forth the magnitude and the multitude of the evils, which, like mighty torrents, or mighty armies, rushed upon him.

David had said and taught, that the Lord is to be called upon with praise and love by those who would wish to be delivered from their enemies. And now, he tells us that he himself did this, and gives us the history of himself as an example of his doctrine which he had delivered ; beginning with those worst and most terrible of all enemies, death and hell. And although it is true that David himself often suffered these punishments and

sorrows of death and hell, (as he confesses in many of his Psalms, and especially Psalm cxvi. 3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow: then called I upon the name of the Lord:" where he uses the same words and describes the same feelings as in the present passage,) yet, we have begun to understand this Psalm of Christ, and to omit the general meaning in the meantime, and therefore, we receive this passage as having reference to the death and hell of Christ.

This verse speaks especially of "death," and the following one of "hell;" each setting forth the same thing with a repetition of expression. For "the sorrows of death compassed me about," and "the floods of ungodliness made me afraid," and "the sorrows of hell compassed me about," and "the snares of death prevented me," are all one and the same thing: this, however, is my opinion, but I am not disposed to contend if any one wishes to understand these four things as having each a different signification.

These words are placed very expressively, "compassed me about," not 'came upon me' only, nor pursued me, but, held me fast and hemmed me in on every side, shut and fastened me in by myself and utterly alone; and this is that which especially increases the agony of death: for if we had to go out of the world with a great company with us, whom we could behold all the while and have as companions, death would be a much lighter pain and trial.

The 'cords' or 'enclosures,' which our translator calls "sorrows," signify thus, It is not one object only that surrounds me, not one minister of death only that comes upon me; but many, yea, many forces, many multitudes. And here, again, that solitude is intimated, which is so bitter in death. And these 'cords' or 'enclosures' we may understand to be ungodly men, whose ministration and instrumentality death and the devils use: according to that of Psalm xx. 12, "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have

beset me about." And again, ver. 20, "Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth, for thou hast heard me from among the horns of the unicorns."

Our translator, however, not improperly, understands these 'forces' as signifying the multitude of pains and sorrows which rush in at the hour of death, because there is no creature which does not increase and further this death and horror: for all things that are seen are death and not life: and thus, death is armed with the whole world, and the whole universe fights against the person dying or lying under the horror of death, who is left alone, deserted by all, and surrounded by all terrors. And hence it was, that David could give no name to these terrors, and could only express them in a metaphorical way by calling them 'cords,' or 'enclosures,' or 'forces,' of death. For death, that last and extreme of all evils, would be more tolerable if there were but companions to us when under this evil. But we have said, in our observations upon the former Psalms, that Christ truly suffered the horrors, pangs, and wearying sorrows of death for us; though we do not all suffer the like things.

"The floods of Belial," is again a figurative expression, setting forth the violence and the army of these evils without any particular name. For in truth the pain of death is so great that it can neither be expressed, nor conceived in thought. Those who are under it feel that they are in the worst of conditions, but cannot express or describe to another what it is they feel, and therefore there is no remedy: just as, on the other hand, those who get a taste of eternal life, feel indeed that they enjoy the best of all things, but cannot shew or describe to another what it is they feel: and hence this is called tasting the floods or the rivers of the pleasures of God. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures," Psalm xxxvi. 8. And here he is speaking of the 'floods of ungodliness or of Belial.'



Ver. 5.—*The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.*

These “*sorrows of hell*” are the same thing as “the *sorrows of death* mentioned in the preceding verse: and therefore, we are to receive them as implying the same thing,—that they are the ‘cords’ or ‘enclosures’ of hell, and are the ‘forces’ of all the things of the world combined, all which things stand armed, as it were, to take vengeance on the condemned. And this word, “compass me about,” is of the same signification as the preceding. And death and hell differ very little from each other, as far as the feelings of him who is under their pains are concerned. For death is a bitter separation from life: and hell, which immediately follows upon death, is the feeling of eternal punishment and of the irreparable loss of the soul. And here the soul is truly taken captive and compassed about, and has no other feeling but that it will be damned to all eternity. For if it did but see any way of escape, even of a hair’s breadth wide, it could not be said to be surrounded or compassed about; nor would it feel, in reality, either death or hell, but would rejoice in hope and trust.

And here it is that our school theologians, not having duly considered and weighed these expressions, “have compassed me about” and “have prevented me,” and moreover, not having had any experience whatever of these things, securely dream and prate just what they please about the punishment of purgatory; making it out, that there is no despair in purgatory, only making a satisfaction for sin. And yet, again, they confess, that the punishments of purgatory (as they call it) and of hell are the same, and that they differ only in duration. We, however, knowing that the knowledge of these things lies in experience, and not in speculation, will not spend time in contending; we will simply cleave to the words of the scripture, wherein, even the saints complain, that they are compassed about and prevented by the pains of death and hell. Let those who experience these things look at what they mean: but, as for those who

experience nothing of these things, to such we shall pay no regard whatever: for they know not yet what wrath and lust mean, even those most common, gross, and beastly affections of human nature.

And this, "the snares of death prevented me," is the same thing: for David here says and signifies, that he was taken captive by death; and so taken that he was prevented by its snares; that is, the snares of death prevailed against him, and were too strong for him, so that he could not escape them: and this is to be in hell, where no way of escape is found: like a bird, which, when caught in a snare, returns not to liberty. And we believe, that all these things happened unto Christ, though in a wonderful way; and that he was taken with these pains of death and hell, and with these snares of death.

Ver. 6.—*In my distress I called upon the Lord and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his holy temple, and my cry before him entered into his ears.*

In the Hebrew, there is here the future tense throughout the whole verse, 'I will call,' 'I will cry,' 'he shall hear,' and, 'it shall enter;' and Hieronymus has so translated it, and it is so read also, 2 Sam. xxii. Though this is of no consequence, because the prophets have the peculiar custom of using tenses in that irregular way, but yet, not without cause, as I have often observed.—David, therefore, here goes on to shew by his example, that what he taught was true,—that all those were saved who prayed unto God and called upon him praising. For (says he) I also was in great distresses and tribulations, that is, in the pains and sorrows of death and hell; and I was saved from all these cries, because I called upon the Lord and cried unto my God; for he heard my voice, and my cry entered into his ears. And therefore, there remains no doubt about it, but it is a certainty, that there is no other way of obtaining deliverance than by calling upon the Lord; and confessing unto and praising God. And we have seen, Psalm xvi. what the force and meaning of the

expression "my God" is: for no one can say "my God," but one that praises God and truly loves him, and that in the midst of death and hell: and this a true lover of God may do: as it is written, Song viii. 6, "Love is strong as death."

David here abounds in repetitions from the sweet feelings of his mind: because, it is nearly the same thing to say "I called upon the Lord," and, "I cried unto my God:" and also, "and he heard me from his holy temple," is the same as "and my cry in his sight entered into his ears." All these expressions are simple and plain, but full of the sweetest affections and feelings.

Ver. 7.—*The earth shook and trembled: the foundations of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.*

What David means from this verse to the *tenth* I am not able to ascertain. We never have read any where that the earth shook, and that the mountains moved and the other things done which are here spoken of, on David's account, nor indeed were these things ever done for Christ even. Some here have recourse to allegory, not thinking any thing of the consequence of always flying to an allegory; for what is more easy, than to tack an allegory to every difficulty they meet with, and so get over it in that way?

Lyra seems to say something to the purpose, when he observes, that it is the manner of the scriptures, when they would set forth and praise any singular benefit of God, to repeat from the beginning, in a regular way, those signal benefits that God has wrought for his people, or to enumerate some of the greatest and most striking of them: according to Psalm cxix. 52, "I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord; and have comforted myself." And Psalm lxxvii. 11, "I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings." Thus Deborah also, Judges v. when she was going to sing unto the Lord, begins by recording the departure of

Israel out of Egypt: "Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel." And after the same manner it is that David saith, Psalm lxxviii. 7, 8, "O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness, Selah; the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, of the God of Israel." And again, Psalm lxxvii. 16, "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee: they were afraid, the depths also were troubled: the clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound, thine arrows also went abroad: the voice of thy thunder was in the heaven."

Let it be understood, therefore, that the praisers of God were accustomed to repeat the wonderful works of God of old, when they praised him, and especially, that most signal work of his, the leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, which also the children of Israel are known to have remembered and celebrated above all other of God's works: and by the remembrance of it they no doubt learnt many things, under the illumination and teaching of the Holy Spirit: so much so, that they seemed to have used it among them as a general proverb: and they also expressed the different parts of this deliverance by different allegories. I cannot, however, fully agree with Lyra, when he applies the words of this Psalm to that same history.

Therefore, I must here be bold enough to offer my thoughts upon the passage.—I think, then, that the past wonderful works of God, as displayed in the deliverance from Egypt, are here mentioned and mingled with the present wonderful works, that is, those which David is now describing. And David does this with a sweet liberty of digressing and expatiating; for we see this usage continually practised in the scriptures. Nor do I think that David is merely describing the deliverance out of Egypt, but, being filled with an overflowing joy,

he seems to take advantage of that work of God, and to apply it in an allegorical way to the praise of Christ, whom he saw to be clearly pointed out in a figure by that great deliverance. And we often see those who give vent in their joy, so to indulge in allegories and figures of speech, that one might think they were mad : for it pleases them to clothe their joy in beautifully figurative and allegorical expressions : one calls that which he is praising his gold, another his honey, another his manna, and another will describe it by some other figure. Every one becomes and acts the poet under these feelings, for his joy itself will prompt him to speak in this figurative way.

So here, when Christ rejoices that he was raised out of hell, while his Father heard him, he not only mingles and repeats the wonderful things of God in old time, but speaks of the same in a most sweet and beautiful allegory, and gives them a new figurative appearance : according to that prayer which we have, Ecclesiasticus xxxvi. 6, “ Shew new signs and make other strange wonders.” And hence, Christ does not take the whole history and speak of it in its order, but selects particular parts of it, just as it answers his present purpose.

Wherefore, we are here to understand, that this history is here used allegorically, especially that part of it which would appropriately apply to the fruits of the resurrection of Christ : and these are comprehended in two things, law and grace. The law humbles the proud, and grace lifts up the humble : and these things are wrought in various and wonderful ways, and are truly the wonderful works of God, which he accomplishes by no other arms and weapons than by the ministers of the Word, by poor, vile, abject fishermen, and their successors : at all which things, if I mistake not, the prophet David here most sweetly alludes, in these allegories and figures.

We read, Deut. xix. and xx. that, when the Lord was about to deliver the law, on the third day, there began to be heard thunders, and lightnings began to flash, and that a cloud began to cover the mountain,

and the whole mountain began to smoke; because the Lord God descended upon it in fire, and the smoke ascended from it as from a furnace. The whole mountain was terrible, and the sound of a trumpet was heard, and began to wax louder and louder. Moses spoke and the Lord answered him, and the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and called Moses up to the summit.

This figure is more rich and full than I can possibly express in words, and, indeed, than I can embrace in imagination: and yet, the prophet David handles it most beautifully: and the other prophets also have taken many things from it, because it is most full and replete with the mysteries of Christ, for it contains the works of nature, of the law, and of grace; that is, the sum of all theology. We will here, therefore, call in the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans, as the first and best of interpreters. He says, "The law worketh wrath." And again, 1 Cor. xv. 56, he says, "The strength of sin is the law." And Rom. i. 18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness." And Rom. v. 20, "The law entered that sin might abound."

The work of the law, therefore, is to terrify and to strike the conscience, and to destroy all a man's own confidence. And this is what is meant by the figure of a great tempest, and properly so, because no other allegory could more aptly set it forth. For thunderings and lightnings move and terrify the earth, and strike and shake the foundations of the mountains: as the poet of old saith,

‘ The lightning’s flash  
The highest mountains strikes.’

Under which circumstances, all fear the angry heavens: as we have it in the Psalm, "At the voice of thy thunders they are afraid:" and that is what he here saith, "Because he was wroth." And that there was such a storm and tempest as this in Mount Sinai when the law was given, is manifest to every one from what we

have advanced : which was, that the figure might shadow forth that which was really wrought, and that the sign might be such as the thing was in reality.

The doctrine and knowledge of the law, therefore, as it threatens eternal punishments, and demands that of us which we are not able to perform or endure, (as it is written, Hebrews xii. 20, for they could not endure that which was commanded,) are terrible and unsupportable to a sinful conscience, and they are the more so, the more loud the voice of the law waxes, or the knowledge of it increases. And therefore, truly are the knowledge of sin produced, and wrath stirred up by the law : that is, the conscience of every man is brought in guilty and condemned as deserving eternal wrath. And this knowledge, when possessed inwardly in the heart, fulfils all that turbulence and violence of the tempest, which is described as having appeared at Mount Sinai. Here, in truth, the earth trembles and is moved, that is, earthly hearts, or the hearts of men, which hearts savour of those things which are of the earth. And not only the mountains themselves, but the foundations of the mountains, are shaken and moved : that is, the proud are scattered in the imaginations of their hearts. For these mountains are the proud, and these foundations are their confidence in their own power, wisdom, righteousness, and what other things soever they are in which they trust. For he that is instructed in the true knowledge of the law understands and knows that no flesh can stand before God, and that by the law no flesh can or shall be justified. Neither power, nor wisdom, nor any thing else is of any avail here : all such things are shaken, and all are brought to nought : “ because he is wroth : ” that is, because the wrath of God is revealed by the law against those, especially, who above all others glory in those foundations.

And here David says “ mountains ” only, because there are also “ holy mountains : ” as we have it, Psalm lxxxvii. 1, “ His foundation is in the holy mountains. ” And in another place, “ Thy righteousness is like the holy mountains. ”—But more especially by “ the founda-

tions of the mountains or hills" are to be understood, confidences in works, or the works of the law, or the law and the doctrine of it, by which things men have a confidence that they are justified. Whereas, the very and especial thing wrought by the word and knowledge of the law is, that they make men sinners, that is, to know that they are sinners, and that all the world may become guilty before God. And it is thus that the Apostle uses the law, applying it principally to the pride of works: saying, Rom. iii. 'But the scripture hath included all under sin, that God might have mercy upon all.' And the grace of Christ also makes especially against the righteousness of men; for it is this righteousness that above all things resists the righteousness of God: as the Apostle saith, Rom. x. 3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

And this also is worthy of remark; that by these thunders not only the tops but the very foundations of the hills are shaken, for the whole earth is made to tremble, even the very roots of the mountains. Thus, the law not only strikes at pride externally (which even the rebukes of men do) but penetrates and shakes the inner parts of the heart, striking with trembling the most secret confidence of the conscience, because the law is spiritual and the Word a living word, more penetrating than the piercing sword, nor is there any one that can hide himself from its brightness.

The Hebrew, with a beautiful play on words, here has it *VATIGEAS VATIROAS HAAREZ*; which our translator perhaps could not properly render: but translated it, "The earth shook and trembled:" but it signifies that trembling commotion by which any one is moved on to flight and running away: which most expressively sets forth the force and effect of the law, and the fear of the conscience. Thus the prophet is not only sweet in his thoughts and sentiments, but also in his expressions and in the selection of his words; if any one would duly observe them.



Ver. 8.—*There went up a smoke in his anger, and a fire burned from his face: coals were kindled by it.*

Hieronymus has it, ‘ There went up a smoke in his fury, and a devouring fire from his mouth: coals were kindled by it.’ This takes place in invisible tempests whenever they are set on fire by the touch of lightning, for there are seen then smoke, fire, and coals. In Mount Sinai Moses shews that there were smoke and fire, but he says nothing about coals in Exod. xix. unless by coals here we are to understand the mountain on fire and burning: for it is certain that all things on and near the mountain were on fire, glittering, smoking, and burning: as he saith, Deut. v. “ And he saw the mountain burn.” And the Apostle tells us that this was terrible to behold, so much so that Moses said, “ I exceedingly quake and fear.” And therefore, though Moses did not exactly express the word coals, yet, he implied and intended it in his expression of ‘ fire.’

The law then is that which, proceeding “ out of his mouth,” that is, out of the mouth of his preachers, his babes and sucklings, sets on fire, burns up, devours, and destroys all that pride that there is in human vanity, that it may make way for grace. For upon the rebukes of the law, there immediately follow fear, trembling, and flight; and when no way of escape appears, there directly follows straitenedness and prison; and this is that fire which burns up and devours all evil, and burns out concupiscence; so that it finds no delight in those things in which it delighted before. And thus coals are kindled by the same fire; for sinners are burnt up when their lusts are consumed by the power of the law. And this is not being sweetly inflamed with love, but being powerfully burnt-up in the furnace of their straitenedness; in which they are smelted, purified, and prepared, like gold in the fire.

But we have here the smoke before the fire. Why then is this? Whoever saw the smoke before the fire? But smoke is a sign of existing fire, and although it be

not prior to it, yet it appears first. Augustine, therefore, by smoke, here understands the weeping supplication of those who repent, when they are brought to know what God threatens to the ungodly. We will not therefore reject Augustine, but will improve upon him. So that we will consider the smoke, to be that external confession of sins, and all those feelings whereby the conscience is evinced to be in flight and straits: as we have it described, Acts ii. where those who were pricked to the heart and convinced by the words of Peter, cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” For by these expressions they signify, what they feel within.—Therefore, ‘a smoke goes up in his anger:’ because the anger of God being known by the law, humbles the proud down to the very depths, and out of these depths they send up this smoke of repentance.

Ver. 9.—*He bowed the heavens also and came down: and darkness was under his feet.*

And this the history also confesses, saying, “And a thick cloud began to cover the mountain.” And Deut. v. and Hebrews xii. there is mention made of the same darkness.—Many have imagined various things concerning this darkness: but I shall go on as I began, and explain the whole according to the allegory which I conceive David intends—I have observed, the proud being humbled by the ministry of the law is what is here intended by the Psalmist: who would here shew, that the power of the law and the wrath of God revealed by it are not felt, and that the foundations of the mountains are not made to shake, nor the earth to tremble, nor the coals to be kindled, nor the sinners to be devoured, nor the smoke to be raised, unless the Lord himself descend and move within, teach, and give increase. For though many heard John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, lightning and thundering with the thunderings of the future judgment and wrath of God, they nevertheless being hardened in heart were; like the scales of Behemoth, never wounded nor moved.

Just as many also are now seen to contemn and laugh at the natural thunder, even though they see many struck dead by it.

This is what David says, and this is what is meant by the figure where it is written, that the Lord descended upon mount Sinai. For the Lord did thus bow the heavens according to the figure: that is, he sent his apostles throughout the whole world against the proud sons of Adam: and he himself descended, co-operating with and confirming their word: as it is said, Gal. ii. 8, "For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."

"And darkness was under his feet." That is, his works and his ways cannot be known. And this is the case when he works his strange work, Isaiah xxviii. 21, when he is damning that he might save, disturbing the conscience that he might give peace. For the works of God in the justifying of a sinner are contrary to all human sense, which will not suffer itself to be humbled and reduced to nothing by the power of the law: because the man cannot understand that good is done to him by these things, he imagines that he is destroyed: whereas in truth he is rising like the morning star: he is scattered that he might be gathered, and plucked up that he might be planted. Therefore, faith is necessary under this darkness: as Job saith, iii. 23, "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?" And Jeremiah x. 23, 24, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing."

Ver. 10.—*And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; he did fly upon the wings of the wind.*

Of this we read nothing in the sacred history before alluded to. Perhaps David has respect unto that of Exod. xxv. where Moses is commanded to look into all things and see that they were made after the pattern

shewn him in the mount. Among which things were the cherubim of beaten gold, and the mercy-seat between them, from which God should speak to him as it is there said.—Here, therefore, from the overflowings of his feelings and language David couples the mysteries of the tabernacle with the mysteries of Sinai. For it is wonderful how copiously the various mysteries of the holy scriptures will flow together, harmonize, and abound, when all the clouds of peril and temptation are dispersed and calmed, and the saint filled with the liberty and joy of the Spirit: for then, as it were, there is nothing that he does not know, and nothing that he will not dare to speak out: he can do all things because the present unction teaches him. And it was a general usage in the scriptures after this to speak of God as sitting upon the cherubim: as in Psalm xcix. 1, “The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.” And Psalm lxxx. 1, 2, “Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, (that is, before the ark, which was towards the west, where those three tribes were placed,) stir up thy strength.”

For the Lord's will, and that which he especially took care of from the beginning, was, that there should be always some external sign, and some memorable monument, by which he might bind the faith of those who believed unto himself, that they might not be led away by various and strange affections into self-formed religions, or idolatries. Thus, Gen. xxii. we have the appellation “Mount Moriah:” that is, “the Lord shall be seen:” because the Lord there had respect unto the offering of Abraham. And chap. xxxv. it is commanded to Jacob that he should build an altar unto God, who appeared to him in Bethel. And hence Moses commanded that they should never choose to themselves any place for the worship of God but that which the Lord had chosen. But this command they often afterwards transgressed, by their groves and high places which they built. And in the same way he gave them the tabernacle, mercy-seat, and cherubim, as places

in which they should call upon him and find him: all which were intended as prefigurations of Christ.

We have not now any particular place of this kind; but yet we are not without our signs and monuments. We have Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But these are fixed to no place in particular: for Christ reigns every where. Wherefore, Christ is our propitiation, or mercy-seat, and our cherubim, in a mystery: which mysteries can only be understood by the ministry of the word of faith. Of Christ being our propitiation, Paul teaches, Rom. iii. 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood:" and "in whom (as the same Apostle saith) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And again, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

And the two cherubim with their wings touching from above and covering the mercy-seat, and both looking down upon the mercy-seat, are the Two Testaments: of which the one is the word of the law, the other the word of grace: which though they seem to be two different things, the one increasing sins, while the other takes them away: yet in Christ they agree; because, that which was impossible unto the law, 'God sending his own Son, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'

And this is what is intended by those who say that cherubim signifies the multitude, or rather, the plenitude of science: because the ministration of each word, that is, of the law and of the promise or grace, if it be rightly administered, teaches all things. The Lord therefore rides or is carried upon the cherubim in spirit and in truth; seeing that he reigns in us by faith, which is produced in us by the ministration of each word. For what our translator renders "ascended upon a cherub," the Hebrew has, 'was carried or rode upon a cherub;' thereby setting forth the power and dominion of the word spoken. Our cherubim therefore are fixed to no place, but, where the word of faith is, there the Lord sits upon a cherub and reigns through

Christ in us. And hence this is also preserved in the figure. For, as there was nothing placed above the cherubim and mercy-seat which could be seen, but God was believed, by faith only, to sit there; (as he said himself, "And I will speak to thee from thence;") so, Christ is believed by us, by faith only, to dwell in God; which we believe upon the testimony of both cherubs or testaments; and we are not to expect the Word of God from any other place than from the mercy-seat, Christ.

And the same thing seems to be implied by this repetition, "Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind." He is here speaking of the spiritual wind; which is the Word of the Spirit itself, opening the nature of the law and pointing out grace. For this word, like a wind, comes with velocity blowing where it will: thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.—And the "wings" of these winds are the vocal words themselves, in which the spiritual winds blow. For even the Gentiles have their Mercury, (by whom they signify divine communication by word,) and they represented him with winged feet. So naturally is this allegory of wings fixed in the human mind.—God flies therefore upon the wings of the wind: that is, upon the ministry of the vocal word by which faith is taught; for it is upon these wings he flies above and over us wherever the vocal word is, when he is apprehended by faith; where he is thus apprehended, there without doubt the Lord flies above us.

And God is said to "fly," though the cherubim which were made of beaten gold did not fly. For David saw that wings were not given to the cherubim in vain, under the Mosaic dispensation: for wings are given to fly with. David by this therefore saw it to be signified, that there would be a certain flying of the Word throughout the whole world, (which is the ministry of the Word itself,) and that it would fly with this kind of flight and upon these wings, and that the Lord would be every where present with his Word: as he says, Mark xvi. 20, "The Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following." Wherefore this flying seems

to me to signify the velocity of the Word's progress through the whole world: as we have it, Psalm cxlvii. 15, "His Word runneth very swiftly." It not only signifies this, however, but also shews, that the Word will never cease to sound, nor God to work with and by it in the church. For we are never to cease from the Word: it is to be in use, in motion, and in flight, that the Lord may always fly above and move in us by faith. Who, although he can do all things by himself, has yet decreed to do all these things by the ministry of the Word, that there may be opportunity and occasion for faith, and that he may thereby meet our infirmities, which cannot endure divine things unless covered and veiled by the Word; in which, the Lord carries us as in a womb or bosom, as Isaiah saith, xlvi. 3.

Wherefore, David is not to be despised when he uses the verb 'flying' thus in a repetition; because he does it to instruct us, and to shew us, that the Spirit of the Lord does not move upon the face of the waters of all mankind in general, and that he does not rule by his presence any but those who are disciplined by the Word; that he might thereby destroy all the presumption of human power and free-will, and set forth the grace and kindness of God our Saviour to those who hear his Word and keep it. Hence we have it written, Deut. xxxii. that the Lord flew above the people of Jacob as an eagle leadeth forth her young to fly, and fluttereth over them, and beareth them upon her wings.

Ver. 11.—*He made darkness his secret place: his tabernacle was round about him: and dark water in the clouds of the sky.*

The prophet seems here to have touched upon the two-fold figure of Sinai, and the tabernacle; at least in the first part of the verse; which seems to speak of the tabernacle and of the holy of holies. Because there being no light in the holy of holies, signified that where God dwelt in his church, through Christ, there was faith in their hearts; which neither comprehends nor is comprehended, neither sees nor is seen—and yet sees all

things. It is an evidence of things present indeed, but not seen : as the arc of the testimony was most present in the holy of holies, but yet appeared not nor was seen. And so also 'his tabernacle was round about him,' because he sat in the middle of the holy of holies. By which is signified, that which David saith, Psalm xlvi. 5, 'God is in the midst of the church, she shall not be moved.' This prophecy, and others like it, David drew from the figure of the tabernacle.

Because, God does not reign in us superficially, and in tongue and word only, but in power: nor are they sound and stable who believe in him in tongue and word only: but those who believe in him in heart are righteous, in the midst of whom he dwells. These are strong and are helped by the countenance of God (that is, the presence of God) in all things: as we have it, Psalm xlvi. 5, "God shall help her by his countenance, (or by the light of the morning,)" that is by his very presence, and countenance.

But let us shew also how this agrees with the figure set forth by Mount Sinai. It is written concerning it, that when the Lord descended, the mountain began to be covered with darkness. And when he was on the top and middle of the mountain, he might rightly be said to have made darkness his secret place. Whereby the same faith is signified by which he dwells in the midst of his church in our hearts, where he is not seen. This darkness, while it is without us, is the killing letter; which is terrible to the wisdom of the flesh, which shudders dreadfully at being killed, and yet killed it must be, as the law commands it to be, that it might ascend with Moses to the top of the mount and enter in through the darkness unto the Lord: for there can be no entering into this darkness unto the Lord unless the wisdom of the flesh be mortified by the law.

"His pavilion was round about him," or 'In his circuit, his tabernacle.' That is, 'In his circuit, or round about him, he placed his tabernacle.' Though in the Hebrew we have no preposition, but it is, literally, 'In his circuit, his tabernacle.' That is as he made dark-



ness his secret place, so he made his circuit to be his tabernacle. Which seems to me to be spoken to signify this,—That faith, or the church sanctified by faith, is that in which the Lord dwells. For it was for that end that he placed his tabernacle that he might be in the midst of it and that round about him, and that he might be enclosed by it and hidden in it; even as the ark was surrounded and enclosed by the holy of holies, and as he was surrounded by the cloud and darkness of Sinai.

And this strikes at all respect of persons, when David says, that his tabernacle is that by which he is surrounded. And all that form this tabernacle, or this surrounding, have neither distinction of name or person: for whosoever they be that surround the Lord and cleave unto him, whether they be gentiles or Jews, become his tabernacle, for there is no distinction here. But, as I said, these things are terrible to the flesh when about to enter in, but sweet to the spirit when entered in. For man enters not here but by the darkness or cloud of faith, and faith enters not but by the mortification of the flesh. Wherefore, this darkness, while it is outward only, is death and hell; but where it becomes wrought inwardly, it is life and salvation. For the letter only presents to us darkness and the cross, but the life of faith bursts through, and, entering in through the darkness, findeth God. He, therefore, that flees from and dreads this darkness, as the people of Israel did, making excuses and requesting that the word of the law might not be given them,—such an one never enters in unto the Lord. For unless thou hear the law which humbles thee and crucifies thee, thou wilt never hear the Lord talking with Moses. And indeed, Moses himself entered not in until the Lord called him; as we have it written in the words of Exodus.

“And dark water in the clouds of the sky.”—Although most have employed many speculative dissertations upon these “clouds of the sky,” and have considered them among the prophetic obscurities, I, following the general import of the words and sentiments of David, understand by “dark water” the work of the law: that

is, the mortification of the flesh, the sorrows of conscience, and the wrath of judgment, by which the flesh is afflicted under the law. Even as those dark clouds of tempests are watery, bitter, and troublesome. And water and darkness always signify, in the holy scriptures, affliction and persecution.

These 'clouds of clouds,' indeed, or these 'clouds of the air,' are the apostles themselves, proclaiming heavy tidings and afflicting things to the world, while they conclude all under sin by the word of the law. For they are the circuit of God, or they that surround him, and he is hidden and present in the midst of them, and by them works all things by his word. Thus, Isaiah v. 6, the Lord saith concerning his vine, which is the figure whereby he represents the house of Israel, "I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." And chap. lx. 8, he saith, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to the windows?"—When the dark clouds are dispersed and opened, they rain a wholesome shower: whereas, before, by their blackness, they seemed to threaten destruction. And so also a preacher of the law kills and yet makes alive, when he comes to shew that the law was spiritually fulfilled in Christ. This allegory of the clouds and of rain is very frequently used in the scriptures to set forth the ministry of the Word.

*Ver. 12.—At the brightness that was before him the thick clouds passed away: hail-stones and coals of fire.*

The full meaning of this verse and how it agrees with the preceding, I confess that I do not understand. Therefore, let the first word of my commentary upon this passage be, 'I do not know.' But, that I may give occasion for others to produce their thoughts, I will offer what I can; though I am uncertain whether or not I shall be right.

Augustine and Hieronymus think, that by these things are signified the turning away of the apostles from the Jews to the gentiles. But they do not shew how the whole agrees to make that acceptance to be right, or how we are to understand that this was effected by the

brightness that was before the Lord. And, that we may not think that we alone are puzzled by this passage, Cassiodorus thinks "at the brightness" is a plural expression, and refers to the clouds before-mentioned. It is no wonder, therefore, that we should fail in understanding the passage when such great men have met with such sad literary falls in making it out. I will therefore see what I can make of it.

Hitherto, David has been singing of the ministry of the Word, that is, of the first part of it, the doctrine of the law; by which, when the Lord is present to work in and by it, sinners are humbled. And now, he is singing of the next part of the Word, by which, after the power and effects of the law, he lifts up the humble by grace and comforts them. The sense will be, therefore, those black and terrible clouds under which the wrath of God is revealed by the preaching of the word of the law, now pass away, blow over, and disappear, at the brightness and clear shining which is before the Lord at his coming: that is, the revelation and knowledge of God by which his mercy is known; which is so sweet that the power and tumult of the former legal dispensation no longer afflicts and produces sorrow. For, as Bernard says, 'As the knowledge of a man's self without the knowledge of God only works desperation; so, the knowledge of God without a knowledge of a man's self only works presumption.' (If, indeed, he may call that the knowledge of God, which is without the knowledge of a man's self: for that must of necessity be a mere speculative knowledge.)

Thus Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 9, 10, 12, ascribes trusting and hope to the knowledge of the glory of God, saying, "If the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excellet. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." And again, ver. 18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory,

even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Here you have the Apostle speaking of the glory of the revealed face of God; and he uses almost the same words as David does in the verse before us, "at the brightness that was before him." And what is 'the brightness that is before him,' but the glory and brightness of the revealed face of God.

What then is the glory of the Lord? and what is the revelation of his face? These things we have set forth in the four and other preceding Psalms. The countenance of the Lord, and the face of God, being upon us and in our sight, is nothing else than having God present with us and propitious unto us, trusting in him, and, as the scripture expresses it, knowing the Lord: which is never attained unto in this world but by faith. Thus the Apostle saith, Hebrews viii. 11, from Jeremiah, "And they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall know me, from the least to the greatest." And Isaiah xi. 9, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." This knowledge of God rejoices the heart, even as the knowledge of a man's self gives it sorrow: because the former sets mercy before the man's eyes, (as we have it Psalm xxvi.) but the latter always sets sin before us, and forces us to think of sin, (as we have it, Psalm li.) The sight of God, therefore, is the revealed knowledge of God, in which is beheld the glory or brightness of God. And the glory of God is our justification: for we see that this 'is not of him that runneth, but of him that sheweth mercy:' hence we give not glory to ourselves but unto God; who, as the Apostle saith, does all things to the glory of his grace, that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. Hence all our own glorying is done away with, and our shame revealed unto us by the word of the law.

But when these clouds have passed by, and sinners have been sufficiently humbled by the knowledge of sin, which is produced by the word and ministry of the law, and when we are brought into the sight of God, where

we behold the glory of his grace, and are filled with peace, and rejoice and praise God, then the "hailstones and coals of fire" also pass away.—For I consider that the verb 'pass away' is thus to be referred to the clouds, hail, and coals of fire.

This "hail" allegorically signifies the bitter and terrible words of the law; or, as he says in another place, 'the chidings and rebukes of the people.' And these 'fiery coals,' or "coals of fire," we understand to be the same as those whom he before said were kindled by the fire: namely, sinners themselves, who are consumed and burnt up in straits and the fire of God's wrath. Or, it may signify the same words of the law by which that fire of repentance is kindled in the conscience. And this latter exposition I the rather would adopt, because all those things pass away as soon as the knowledge of the sweet mercy of God is revealed. For then, those clouds which before were odious, become sweet and pleasing, and those preachers of the law which before we abhorred, we love, and now approve of their hard and cutting words. Just as a child hates his preceptor and all his discipline until he has attained unto his inheritance: for then he understands how useful that severity of his preceptor was. This the Apostle has beautifully set forth to us in his Epistle to the Galatians, which is very useful in understanding the present passage.

*Ver. 13.—The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice, hail-stones and coals of fire.*

David here seems to adduce this verse out of that part of the history, Exodus xix. where it is written, that the Lord answered Moses when he spoke, and then that voices were heard, and the Lord delivered the Ten Commandments. The allegory of which is, that the law is fulfilled only by the voice of the Lord speaking. For what is it for Moses to speak and the Lord to answer, but, that the law was given by Moses, but that grace and truth, which alone answer to the law and fulfil it, came by Jesus Christ. As John saith, i. 17,

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “The Lord (therefore) thundered from heaven :” that is, by the company of the apostles, he preached the word of grace. And “he gave out his voice;” which is the same thing in repetition. For the voice of the Lord is the voice of power : as we have it, Psalm xxix. and lxviii. “The voice of the Lord is a voice of power.”

And David beautifully dwells upon this figure, Psalm cxlvii. 16, 17, 18, “He giveth snow like wool, he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels, who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word and melteth them : he causeth his wind to blow and the waters flow.” By all which things David means the ministry of preaching : which is terrible by the first preaching of the law, but sweet by the next preaching of grace. And in this sense, we are to understand the hail and the coals of fire in a different way from that in which we received the same expressions in the former verse. For there we said that the hard and cutting words of the law were signified : but here the sweet and cooling words must be understood as signified. Because by some experience we may also assert, that the word of grace is also hard and cutting, that is, to flesh and blood. For man knows not the value of it like the Jews, John vi. ; for to them the word of Christ, which was the word of life, was “hard,” and, as it were, the word of death. And Paul confesses that he is a sweet savour to Christ, both in them that are saved and in them that perish : that to the one he is the savour of life unto life, and of the other of death unto death. And yet this appears to be violent and forced.

The order of the words will then be, “The Lord gave his voice ; which was hail-stones and coals of fire : that is, sharp and burning. “For our God is a consuming fire :” nay, as Jeremiah xxiii. 29 saith, “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

And David expresses himself thus concerning the hail-stones and coals of fire, that we may not attribute

the power and effects of the law to the apostles and preachers of it, but to God alone; who alone gives the clouds and coals of fire, and causes them to pass away: for it is the Lord himself that gives this voice from heaven.

It is manifest, therefore, that the translators did not understand these verses, when they rendered it, *Dedit vocem suam, grando et car bones ignis*. Which ought to have been rendered *vocem suam, grandinem et carbones ignis*, in the accusative governed by the verb *dedit*. But however, it matters not much whether you separate *vocem* from *grandinem* or not: provided that you understand both as signifying the word of preaching: which, as it is various, and serving for various feelings and ends, so it is represented by those numerous effects and states of the tempest; such as, stars, rains, hail, clouds, snow, lightning, thunder, and every other that takes place in the heavens, whether reviving or mortifying; the former is the effect of the word of life, the latter is the word of the law. For the heavens are the apostles; as we shall see in the following Psalm.

And these verses vary a little also from the song as recorded 2 Sam. xxii.: but all this variety and difference I leave to the studious, and those who have time to attend to it.

Ver. 14.—*Yea, he sent out his arrows and scattered them: and he multiplied lightnings and discomfited them.*

It is evident, that the prophet is here speaking altogether allegorically concerning the “arrows,” as nothing of this is read in the history concerning the transaction in Sinai: and therefore, he must call the lightnings arrows: concerning which, it is said Exod. xix. “and there were lightnings.” And thus David saith, Psalm lxxvii. “The skies sent out a sound, thine arrows also went abroad.” Hence those words by which the conscience is pierced are called “arrows:” as we have it, Psalm xxxviii. 2, “For thine arrows stick fast in me.” And Job vi. 4, “For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit:

the terrors of the Lord do set themselves in array against me." And we read much of these arrows every where in the scriptures.

These lightnings, thunderings, and arrows, therefore, are the same words of the law, which terrify, distress, and pierce the heart of the sinner. For the prophet is still going on to speak of, and inculcate, the office of the law. And hence, this verse may serve as an argument and proof that the preceding verses are to be understood as having reference to the office of the law, more than to the word of grace: that the whole may agree together. For we have said, that the word of the law is multiplex and various in its work which it works in the heart of a sinner, by alarming, terrifying, threatening, convincing, and burning him, &c. And therefore it was, that it was represented on Mount Sinai by the various signs and appearances of a tempest, as it is also in this and in many other places: all which things are better understood by experience than they can possibly be set forth by word. And hence, as the prophet before us could not possibly do it in his own words, he had recourse to the history itself, that he might shew it in an allegorical way, when he could not fully explain it himself.

And so I also, if I cannot attain to any thing else, am contented with saying, that by all that tempest of Mount Sinai, and all the words in which it is described, is signified and set forth all that tumult which the Word of God causes in the heart of a sinner, in order that he may be changed into a hatred of himself, and the world, and be savingly killed. For all these things are the wars of the Lord of hosts, who fights from heaven against them: as it is written, Judges v. in the words of Deborah. —So that the sum, scope, and meaning of the whole Psalm lies in this,—that Christ having suffered, being risen, and being preached by the Holy Ghost, and being believed in and worshipped, humbles the pride of the world. This is a summary exposition of the meaning of this Psalm, as any one may see in the face of it, if he be but the least observant.

And he says, "he scattered them:" that is, he sun-



dered and divided them. For he came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; by which a man should not only be divided from those of his own household, but from himself also, by hating his life in this world.— And he not only sent these lightnings, but multiplied them: so that by the multitude of the preachers he involved the whole world in the tumult of the cross: and hence, he says, Psalm lxxviii. 11, “The Lord gave the Word, great was the company of those that published it.” “I will send (say she) fishers, and I will fish them.” Thus there is a saving, ‘scattering,’ and ‘discomfiting,’ by which men are led to true peace and unity. Some by lightnings, understand the miracles by which the Lord confirmed the word of his apostles. But all this I leave to each one’s own mind: it is not a bad acceptation.

Ver. 15.—*Then the fountains of the waters were seen and the foundations of the world were discovered: at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the inspiration of the breath of thine anger.*

This can by no means have reference to the history before mentioned, in which nothing is said concerning the fountains of the waters, or the foundations of the world: unless it be supposed to allude to that of Exod. xv. 27, “And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.” By which were figured forth the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples of Christ, as every one allows. So that here the prophet is touching upon the history of the whole passage of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and in the liberty of his spirit opening up the mysteries of the New Testament. And the world has in truth known by the ministry of the Word that the apostles were “fountains of waters,” and princes of the world: as it was promised to Abraham and his seed. And so we have it, Psalm xlv. 16, “Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands.” And there is the same also, Psalm lxxviii. 26,

“ Bless the Lord in the congregations : eventhe Lord from the fountains of Israel.”

Whether, therefore, we understand the passage of the living apostles, or of their books, it is all the same. For as no one would ever judge that the apostles and prophets were such and so great persons, unless the Lord had revealed it to them by the ministry of the Word, and by the power of his miracles, and had magnified those his servants thereby ; so neither would any one judge their books and their contents such and so great, unless by the revelation of the Spirit of Christ, nor would they ever consider them to be the fountains and foundations of the world. But the mind and understanding of the apostles, was the best thing that was in them, and we are to believe it was the best thing in them ; so that the relics of their garments, their bones, the places where they taught, which nourish not the faith of the deluded commonalty, are nothing in comparison of the relics of their mind and spirit, which can be left in no books, but can be preserved only, by the assistance and work of the Spirit, in the hearts of believers. These are the foundations of which Paul speaks, Ephes. ii. 19, 20, “ Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

Hence, this verse is a part of the argument and proof that the prophet in this Psalm is speaking in the Spirit, and that he is taking up the allegory of the history, in reference to Christ. And he says and proves that all this was done not by human will or by any prudence of ours. For who ever could say that his own word could do all these things which have been wrought by the preaching of the Gospel throughout the whole world, those incredible and wonderful works of God, which were foretold in this Psalm, and have now been fulfilled ? These things were done therefore, “ at thy rebuke, O Lord,” (as David says) ; because thou hast rebuked the

nations, and the wicked have fallen under it, and, being savingly reprov'd, have been changed into better men : as John says, xvi. 8, " He shall convince the world of sin." And Rom. xi. 32, " For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. And again, chap. iii. 19, " That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God : for by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified before him."

In the other part of the verse, " by the inspiration of the breath of thine anger," (for this is how it is in the Hebrew) he couples the breath of the anger of God, with that inspiration of his which giveth life unto man, or animal life : as we have it, Gen. ii. " And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. But does not the breath of anger rather kill than breathe life into the man ? It is so. It is the Spirit which convinceth the world of sin, and reveals the wrath of God against all flesh : as we have it, Rom. i. But when sinners are humbled by this wrath, they are in that very work quickened by the life of grace. Hence, Isaiah saith, xi. 4, " He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

We have then in these passages described the ministry of preaching in the church, and the fruit of the resurrection of Christ crucified ; all which David shews is wrought by the Spirit of holiness ; as Paul shews, Rom. i. in his introduction to the Epistle to the Romans : in which introduction he most briefly and beautifully describes all the work of the ministry of the Word, and all the fruit of the resurrection of Christ which is set forth in this Psalm ; as every one who observes and compares both those parts of the scripture may easily perceive.

Ver. 16.—*He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.*

As Christ confessed in the preceding part of the Psalm, that he had suffered, had cried, and was heard, and afterwards spoke of the miracles of his resurrection which were wrought throughout the world by the mi-

nistry of the Word, it may justly be asked, why he now after all boasts that he was delivered out of many waters? For he was not delivered out of many waters after he was risen and was preached throughout the world.—I consider that Christ does not here revert to that which he had before said of his deliverance; but I think he now, as a simple consequence, speaks in the person of his church. For, after the Word of the cross was preached, and alarmed sinners were converted to the faith, immediately persecution began; and, first of all, among the Jews, until the apostles were compelled to turn unto the gentiles, on account of the fury and unbelief of the Jews.

Wherefore, he here sings that history which Luke gives us in his Acts concerning the apostles and believers. And to this all that follows beautifully agrees, where he compares the humble people with the proud people of the Jews, and the obedience of the gentiles with their disobedience, and shews the difference; and he declares that he will confess unto the Lord among the gentiles; which cannot be understood of Christ as speaking in his own person.—And this also makes towards the establishing of the truth of my observation, —because all the words from this verse almost to the end of the Psalm speak of the future time: whereas, hitherto, he had been speaking in the past tense. So that we are here to understand, that it is Christ speaking of his church, and in the person of his church, which is the same as himself in these respects. For Acts ix. Christ spoke to Paul from heaven, saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Whereas it was the church of Christ that he was persecuting.

Christ says, therefore, in the person of his church collected out of the Jews: “He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters.” And this he did when he sent his Holy Spirit down from heaven, and collected into one out of the raging Jews as many as he had ordained unto eternal life. And the word “many,” in this passage signifies the people of the Jews. As we have it, Rev. xvii. 15, “And the waters

which thou sawest are peoples and multitudes." And in many other places of the scriptures, "waters" allegorically signify people. For these words are not to be received as signifying a deliverance from evils: and this the following verse will shew, but they signify an election and a separation from others. And the prophet seems to allude to that of Exod. ii. 10, "And she called his name Moses: and she said, "Because I drew him out of the water." For the word MOSA in this passage is the same as that in Exodus. And Moses was a figure of them who are taken out of the waters; that is, who are chosen out of the rest. And hence Moses' name is interpreted as not being derived from MOYS (*water*) as some dream, but from the verb which signifies 'to take out,' because he was taken out of the waters.

Ver. 17.—*He delivered me from my very strong enemies, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.*

As I observed, all these verbs are in the future in the Hebrew, 'he will deliver:' so that this is the voice of the church spoken by Christ in a way of prediction. They are the words of confidence and hope in God: for she confesses that her enemies are more powerful, and her haters more strong than herself. Whereby, we are to know that we must ever despair of all human help who wish to be under the protection of Christ. For the true and real church is not defended by the secular arm, nor by the all-vain thunderings of our present idols, who shew forth and pretend to the name of church, but deny the power thereof. And we read in the Acts of the Apostles how furious and powerful the people of the Jews were, together with all their princes, against the apostles and disciples of the Lord. But they were delivered from their persecutors and glorified God.—And indeed, the adversaries fulfilled this verse in their rage against Paul only after his conversion.

Ver. 18.—*They prevented me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my protector.*

Here he tells us the manner of his deliverance, how

it was.—Because, in the midst of persecution the Lord did not forsake his church, but stood by to protect it, lest the enemies being more powerful should destroy it. Nor did he this only, but he brought her out into a large place, as the following verse shews. And this is what David means when he says, “in the day of my calamity:” that is, the Lord did not forsake me even in the very time of my persecutions, when I seemed to be utterly deserted, and my enemies appeared to be stronger than I, but he stood by me and defended me. And herein faith is again commended, as being the evidence of things not seen:—that we ought then to believe ourselves the most strong, by the presence of God, when we appear to be the most weak and inferior to all: as Paul saith, “When I am weak then am I strong.” And Joel iii. “Let the weak say, I am strong.” But the wisdom of the flesh does not receive nor understand this.

Ver. 19.—*He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.*

He brought me forth out of the straits of affliction into the broad place of consolation. Thus Paul saith, 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation,” &c. For this broad place and these straits, are used allegorically, to signify consolation and tribulation: as we have it, Psalm iv. 1, “Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.” For tribulation contracts, and joy expands the heart, and makes the face to shine: as we have it, Prov. xv. 13, “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” And again, Prov. xvii. 22, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” Again, ‘A merry heart is a continual feast.’

“He saved me.” Hieronymus has it better, “he delivered me.” “Because he delighted in me:” Hieronymus, ‘because I pleased him.’ The sense is, His pleasure and good-will was towards me. As it is said

also of Christ, Matt. iii. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And Luke ii. "And on earth peace, good-will towards men."—This is a most pure confession, and there is the most powerful confidence and gratitude in these words. The Lord (says David) has done these things for me, not because I was worthy of them, or because I deserved them by any works of mine, but he did it of free and gratuitous mercy. For it has ever pleased him and been his will, to have respect unto and to deliver the humble; that no flesh might glory in his presence, but that he that glorifieth might glory in the Lord; because it is not of him that runneth, but of God's good-will and pleasure, that we are saved.

Ver. 20.—*The Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.*

Here David is comparing the church to the impious synagogue: compared with which the church deserved to be delivered and to be brought forth into a large place: though in the sight of God it had nothing in which it could glory but the good-will of God. And hence in the same way we see, Psalm vii. and xvii. that the church calls upon God to be judged according to her righteousness. For although we are not justified before God but by accusing ourselves, yet the ungodly do us injury in many ways, especially by wresting the words of God. Such as this, where the church mentions her righteousness as that on account of which she glories that God has recompensed her by delivering her from her enemies. For the judgment between God and us, and between us and our adversaries are two different things.

I have said, Psalm xiii. that recompence, in the scriptures, rather signifies an exchange, than a worthiness of merit. For our merits are nothing in the sight of God: nothing is admitted there but free gratuitous mercy only: and when God bestows this upon us, he changes our sorrow into joy, and our straits into enlargement: as it

is written, Isaiah lxi. 3, "To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Let us take heed therefore, that we understand not this righteousness, and this cleanness of hands, of which the church boasts, as being spoken with reference to her state before God, but before the ungodly, who are unjust toward the church when confessing her sins: because with respect to the ungodly she deserves to receive contrary things from those which she suffers at their hands; and they deserve contrary things from those which they hope to obtain.

Hence, we have, Deut. ix. this prohibition, "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God has cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which he sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." We can, therefore, and ought to glory against the ungodly on account of the justice of our cause, but before God we are to be all submission and silence, and give all glory unto him alone.

But I think, that "my righteousness" here refers to patience, and "the cleanness of my hands" to innocence: that is, because the church was injured and bore evil on account of her just cause, doing and rendering evil to no one on account of that injury: and therefore was brought forth into a large place because she pleased God, who is always well pleased to shew his free mercy towards such.

Ver. 21.—*Because I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*

He here goes on comparing the church with the synagogue, as what follows will shew. For the righteous, although they have sin in their flesh, and although their



body is dead because of sin, yet, their spirit lives because of righteousness: as Paul saith, Rom. viii. Whereas, on the contrary, the ungodly shew forth their righteousness in the flesh, but in their spirit there is craft, because of unrighteousness. Hence, the just are outwardly sinners: but inwardly righteous: but the wicked are in outward appearance righteous, but inwardly sinners. And sin in the spirit, which is ungodliness, is far worse than sin in the flesh, which is rebellion and concupiscence. And so also the righteousness of the flesh which is the works of the law, is not to be compared to the righteousness of the spirit which is of faith in Christ.

This is what he means when he says, "Because I have kept the ways of the Lord." And which way did he keep them? In the spirit, not in the flesh; by faith, and not by the merit of works; not by free-will, but by the power of God. And therefore he adds,—“and have not wickedly departed from my God.” That is, the keeping of the ways of the Lord, is not to be ungodly in the sight of God. For ungodliness, as I have often said, is unbelief; which seeks to be justified by its own works; and wherever this is the case, there is no keeping of the ways of the Lord. The Hebrew by a single expression, has it *RASATHI*: that is, literally, *impiavi*, I have not been ungodly before my God; or, I have not ungodlily departed from my God. For ungodliness is a departing and declining from God: as we see Psalm xiv. and Jeremiah xvii. “Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” And therefore, the idiomatic Hebrew expression is, I have not been ungodly to my God; I have not departed through ungodliness from my God.

As, therefore, ungodliness is so great a sin when compared with the remnant sins of concupiscence which are still found in the flesh of the godly, the church may rightly glory if she has not transgressed the ways of the Lord, nor ungodlily departed from her God; as her adversaries have done; who, nevertheless, with a show of righteousness and zeal for God, are mad against her.

Ver. 22.—*For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.*

Here again he cuts at the ungodly, concerning whom it is said, Psalm x. 5, “Thy judgments are far above out of his sight.” And this was the exact case with the synagogue, the church’s rival enemy. For the synagogue wished to appear to have the judgments of God before its eyes above all others, and not to cast away the statutes of the Lord; nay it always accused the church of doing this. And this opposition and contest will remain as long as flesh and blood remain. For the wisdom of the flesh, as it cannot receive the righteousness of the Spirit, cannot endure that its own righteousness should be rebuked and condemned. On the contrary the wisdom of the Spirit, cannot endure that the righteousness of the flesh should be praised; and therefore it always proclaims and extols the righteousness of faith. And hence, these two children in the womb of Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, are engaged in a continual struggle and perpetual war.

Therefore, “Blessed is the man that meditates day and night in the law of the Lord:” for this man has ever before his eyes all the judgments of God, nor does he put away his righteousnesses from him, (which is, in the Hebrew, his ‘justifications.’) This is the man who keeps the ways of the Lord, which are commanded in his judgments and his righteousnesses. And to have the judgments of the Lord always before the eyes, means, to love them: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. But we have need to have the law of God continually before our eyes, and our meditation perpetually in it, because we are distracted and molested with manifold things and events. But this he whose will and affections are in the law of the Lord will always do: and if that law be not always before us, and present with us, we shall soon cast behind us the words of the Lord; and upon this immediately follows, a neglect of the ways of the Lord, and an ungodly departing from God.

Ver. 23.—*I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.*

Here David plainly confesses the remnants of the old man; against which he resolves that he will fight. So the Apostle, Gal. v. Rom. viii. and in other places, teaches us that the flesh and the members which are upon the earth must be mortified. Where, therefore, there is a keeping of the ways of the Lord, and a departing not from God, there always must be the work of the crucifying of the flesh in us, that we may be cleansed day by day and renewed in our mind before God; and there must be a keeping ourselves from our iniquity, that it overcome us not. For sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are not under sin but under grace: nor shall we obey lust so as for sin to reign in our mortal body; though it will never cease to strive for dominion and mastery.

This continual renewing, and this watching over sin, the ungodly despise: for they appear to themselves to be clean, because they have not the judgments and the righteousnesses of God before their eyes, nor do they know or consider how perfect and absolute a cleansing those judgments require. And hence, David adds a very emphatical expression, "Before him:" that is "In his sight." For the ungodly, who despise these spots of uncleanness, become more and more unclean, daily before God; and on this very account,—because they appear to be most clean before themselves and others.

The word *ON*, which our translator has rendered "iniquity," we have not met with before. I know not how to dive into the difference between the word here given and those words which are generally used to signify iniquity. I should therefore willingly admit, that this word signifies the works of the flesh, and that it refers to original sin. So that I would receive *ON* as signifying that sin which unbridled concupiscence and lust commit, that is, when sin reigns and rules in the open works of it. For all the other terms express more

the prohibitions of the law than the original evil breaking out. As we have it, Psalm li. 5, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me." If these remarks therefore be true, they will make exactly for our purpose; for the church here proposes to guard herself, lest the remnant of sin should break out into the open act.

*Ver. 24.—Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye sight.*

Here he repeats the same thing that he said above, in order that he might open his mind more clearly and add more. And all this he says directly against his adversaries, who will not believe these things, and who have far different thoughts of themselves. For in all this David continually cuts at the synagogue and gives it a side blow: for the synagogue is that generation which seem pure in their own eyes, but have never been washed from their filthiness: as we have it, Prov. xxx. And therefore, these characters continually cast in the face of the godly and the church uncleanness and condemnation, and consider the church to be those who most of all fight against God, and that they are not clean before him nor kept from their iniquity.

Against these, as I have observed, it is that David justifies his cause, and boldly says that God's judgment of the church is far different from this judgment and sentence of the ungodly. For although the church be not righteous and of clean hands in the sight of the ungodly, yet she is so in the sight of God; that is, in the sight of God and of all those who have the eyes of God; that is, who are spiritual. For the ungodly judge of all things perversely, but God judges of all things rightly. Hence, it comes to pass, that to the pure all things are pure, but to the impure nothing is pure. To the ungodly the saint is polluted, the guilty is innocent, the elect is reprobate, what is divine is devilish; and, in a word, to the perverse all things are perverse: which

takes place, because the ungodly judge according as things are in their eyes, and not according as they are in the sight of God.—Hence it follows,

Ver. 25.—*With the holy thou wilt shew thyself holy, and with the innocent man thou wilt shew thyself innocent. With the elect thou wilt be elect; and with the perverse thou wilt be perverse.*

Here David shews the reason why it is that the ungodly condemn all things of the godly. The reason is, because they themselves are unclean and perverse: and every one forms his judgment according as he is himself: as I have shewn before out of the Epistle of Paul to Titus. ‘To the impure nothing is pure, because even their mind and conscience is defiled.’ David says therefore, that he has cleanness of hands and righteousness; but not in the sight of the ungodly; in whose sight the godly man is, and can do, nothing but what is abominable and intolerable iniquity and uncleanness; but in the place of this contempt God gives glory and honour.—In the mean while, therefore, David consoles himself in faith and hope, saying, Let him that is filthy be filthy still. For all such perverse men are to be left to their own perverse ways. But we will glory in this: that we, O Lord, though reprobate in their sight are saints in thine. For with the holy thou wilt be holy: that is, (to introduce a new and admirable explanation of the expression) With the sinner thou wilt be holy. For that holy man or saint with whom God is holy, is none other than he who denies himself, and ascribes holiness unto God only, taking nothing but sin unto himself by a true confession. As they did who are recorded, Dan. ix. ‘To the Lord our God belongeth righteousness, but to us confusion, as it is this day.’ And by this confession, in truth, by which they give all holiness unto God, they are themselves justified by that righteousness which they give unto God, it being reciprocally imputed unto them. For truth truly sanctifies: and this truth is, confessing that we all are unclean, and that God only is holy.

And therefore, they are thus saints and holy: that

is, those who are truly humble and vile in their own eyes : —they always account whatever God says and does as a holy thing, and the best thing ! And they say with Psalm cxix. 137, “ Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.” And again, Psalm cxlv. 17, “ The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.” For as their own will is mortified, they delight only in the will of God, and, whatever that will decrees to happen unto them, that they praise, bless, and revere.

On the other hand, the perverse and impious man, whose own will lives and is uppermost in all things, condemns every thing which God says or does : for he wants all things to turn out just according to his own will and opinion : for he considers his own will to be a holy of holies : and when he cannot have his own will, that which is really the holy will of God he perverts, and condemns it as most profane and most execrable. And the godly man, in whom God speaks and works, is a proof of this ; for such an one the ungodly man cannot bear. And hence, God is necessarily perverted by the perverse, and his saint is by the ungodly man held as accursed. And such as God is held and esteemed by the man, such does he work in him. Wherefore, to the perverse all things are perverse, even the things which he receives from God.

Hence, you see, that God is not held as holy, elect, innocent, or perverse, according to his nature and substance, but according to his Word and his works, which he works in the good and the evil ; and both these characters receive from him that which they ascribe and give unto him. For as the godly man holds himself as unclean, and God as holy, and sanctifies him in every thing that he says or does, so he is sanctified of God. And so also, the ungodly, as he sanctifies himself and makes God to be impure, is in every thing that he says and does, polluted, defiled, and impure. For he that sanctifies himself in all things cannot but make God unholy and unclean in all things that he does and says. And he that sanctifies God in all his words and actions, cannot but hold himself unclean and impure. How

wonderful, therefore, is this pollution and sanctification :— the one is sanctified in all his pollution, and the other is polluted in all his sanctification ! And is not the ungodly the most unhappy of all men, who is thus polluted under all his sanctification ? And is not the godly the most happy of all men who is thus sanctified under all his pollution ? And what is the cause of all this ? David tells us directly in the next verse, “ For thou (says he) wilt save the afflicted people, but wilt bring down high looks.” There is no holiness of man so great, therefore, but it will pollute and defile him in all he says and does, while he ascribes not holiness to God alone. Nor is there any sin so great but that a man may be sanctified under it, if he by a true confession ascribe it all to himself and take it all away from God.

But it is a most difficult and arduous thing for a man not to ascribe any holiness unto himself, and not to attribute any sin unto God. For who is always so affected and has such feelings in all things which God works in with us, as to sanctify every word and every work of his ? that is, to reverence and embrace it altogether as a sacred and holy thing ? Who considers punishments, shame, deaths, and all evils as holy things, and holds them all in reverence ? Job however was one of those saints, and holy persons. To him, every thing that God brought upon him was holy : for he said, Job ii. 10, “ Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ? ” “ The Lord (says he) gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord.”

But look at the ungodly man, who has one hair touched (as we say) contrary to what he wished in his own mind, and see if he will not call upon his hundred gods, (as we also say,) and declare that what has happened to him has been injurious, unjust, and impious, and that these things did not happen unto him at the will and command of God, but at the will and command of the devil, and that they have befallen him, though a holy, elect, and innocent man. For with all these perverse things does he adorn and set himself off ; while,

on the contrary, in all this his ignorance, he ascribes unto God, (that is to his word and his works,) injury, iniquity, and all the evil that has befallen him.—From these observations, therefore, we may easily come to an understanding of these two verses.

Thus, “With the innocent thou wilt be innocent,” is nothing more or less, than that whatever God says or does appears innocent in the eyes of the godly; for they always praise and justify all his acts. And by this their confession and these their feelings before God they are also innocent in all they say or do. For they have in God a most happy and blessed bartering and exchange of things: so that such as they in their hearts hold God to be, such are they held and accounted of God.—Innocent, in this place, is in the Hebrew *THAM*: that is, whole, approved, perfect, and immaculate: as we have it, Psalm cxix. 1, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way.” And Song v. 2, “My sister, my dove, my undefiled.” And this, according to the Teutonic word **from**, signifies ‘One that hurts no one and does every thing that he ought.’

And so also this, “And with the elect thou wilt be elect.” In the same manner is nothing more or less, than that the godly have always that mind and feeling, that whatever God does with them they hold as an elect (that is an eligible, prizable, precious,) thing; and they would not have it otherwise, but are content with it, and praise and bless God for it. And they comfort and console themselves with this alone,—that they know it was that which was pleasing unto God! So, we have it Matt. xi. that Christ confessed and rejoiced ‘that the Father had hid those things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes; and that, because it seemed good in his sight.’ And in this feeling and affection of mind they are elect and precious in the sight of God.

But flesh cannot receive these things as being so, nor can the ungodly understand them at all: for to them all things seem just the contrary; that is, they consider, that the ways of God are not kept by the godly, and that they are not kept from their iniquity; that they are not recompensed according to the cleanness of their



hands; and that God is not holy with them, nor innocent, nor elect unto them. But they consider that whatever the godly do is altogether ungodly in the sight both of God and man: and therefore, they condemn the whole that the godly say or do as foolishness, error, sin, heresy. So that, all these words which are spoken in the person of the church, cannot be understood but by faith: but they are true, though they appear to be quite the reverse in the sight and estimation of men; as I have often observed.

From these things we understand that the prophet in this place does not speak of the election of eternal predestination, nor of the first grace of justification, but of the fruit itself, the practice, the works, and rewards of justification. For he wishes to shew what the word and grace of faith work in men and obtain from God: according to that of 1 Sam. ii. "Him that honoureth me I will glorify him: but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." For man does not honour God first, before he is visited with grace, and honoured of God: but, when he has received grace, then he labours from that time, not to fall from grace on account of men, either friends or enemies, and not to do any thing that may offend God. Where, therefore, he suffers shame and ignominy from men for the sake of God, persevering all the while in honouring God, God gives him glory for this shame, and, contrary to the opinion of all, 'with the holy he will be holy, and to the elect he will shew himself elect.'

That this is the meaning of David is proved by what precedes and what follows; when he says, 'that he was recompensed according to the cleanness of his hands:' by which he clearly shews, that he was now in possession of first grace, and suffering evil, and in the way to be chosen (or held precious) and honoured of God. And he afterwards says, "For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks:" whereby he shews, that he was now in the exercise of grace received, and in the midst of the proud.

And I have observed before, that it becomes a

reader of the holy scriptures to observe diligently, that he apply not those words of God to the beginning of grace which speak of the fruits and work of grace. It is from this error that that poison of heresy took its rise, which ascribes to free-will *the power of disposing itself to receive grace!* And such erroneous ones fall into this error in their acceptation of that passage of Zechariah, "Turn ye unto me and I will turn unto you," and the like scriptures.—Wherefore, we are in this passage to understand holy, innocent, elect, to signify a godly man, who is accounted in his own eyes, and in the eyes of the ungodly, the most wicked, the least innocent of all, and reprobate, altogether unworthy to live, and the most brutish and despicable of all men.—And God's being holy, innocent, and elect unto, or with, or to such an one, signifies nothing more or less, than that he is a despiser of all respect of persons, and looks only at these humble and despised ones, that he may make them manifest as being, and declare them to be, saints, holy, innocent, and elect; and that, because they openly confess, and in their hearts allow, him to be holy, innocent, and elect.

Hence you may understand God to be holy with the holy, in two ways, both actively and passively:—in that he sanctifies them, and in that he is sanctified by them. And this is that which Christ also says, Matt. x. 32, "He that confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father." And again, John xii. 26, 'He that ministers unto me, my Father will honour him.' And how does he honour him? but by declaring and manifesting that he is a saint, holy, innocent, and elect; though the ungodly have accounted him, and declared him to be, profane, and an injurious and abandoned and lost character. These, therefore, are words of consolation to those, who, living godly in Christ, are despised by this world.

Again, "With the perverse thou wilt be perverse."—Here we have described and set forth that proud Moab who is always ready to teach God, and to judge of all things which God does and says in and respecting his

elect. And yet, all the while, he does nothing else but sound forth God from his mouth, presuming that he teaches all sacred and holy things. And this was the peculiar vice of the Jews above all other nations. But God is not perverse to them, as to his nature, he is only so as to his word and his works, in which he reigns in godly men.

Wherefore, we who observe that the prophet is here speaking in the Spirit, understand this perverse man to signify him, who is not only not perverse in his own eyes and in the eyes of men, but the only truly holy, innocent, and elect character, and one who is altogether a holy of holies; one that builds his nest among the stars, and considers that he is a ring upon the right hand of God; in the eyes of whom, all things are nought and polluted that the righteous do or say, and his own things all fair and bright. But by this very perverseness whereby he thinks perversely of God himself and all others, he deserves that God should pervert him as he perverts God, and that he should be made manifest to all as being perverse.

*Ver. 27.—For thou wilt save the humble people, but wilt bring down high looks.*

You see that all these things are spoken in the person of the people of Christ, who are holy, innocent, elect, &c. but yet humble; that is, despised, and appearing to be any thing but this holy, approved, and elect people, in the eyes of these proud and perverse ones. Here, therefore, David gives a reason for all that he had before said, and proves and declares God to be good, and his judgment righteous. God (he shews) therefore sanctifies the holy, because he saves the humble: and the saints are humble, that is, vile and cast out by others. And God also therefore perverts the perverse, because he brings down the high looks of the proud: and the perverse are proud, and honoured and magnified by others. As if David had said, This, O Lord, is thy justice and equity, nay, thy nature,—to exalt and lift up the humble and to dwell with them; but to humble the proud and

to oppose them. Of which we have said much before, and the scripture is full of it.

And David very appropriately said, ‘the eyes or looks of the proud,’ not, ‘the proud.’ For the great vice of the proud is in their eyes; because they mind high things, and see those great things in themselves which have no existence. So that there is no necessity for talking about humbling those *things* in which the proud pride and boast themselves, because they have no existence: it is only requisite to bring down their *eyes and looks*, by which they look with contempt upon the humble, and admire themselves. Hence, Prov. xxx. 13, “There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes, and their eye-lids lifted up.” On the other hand, Paul says, Rom. xii. 16, “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.” And Job xxii. 29, “When men are cast down, then thou shalt say there is a lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.” Thus the ungodly have their eyes lifted up to their virtue, righteousness, and wisdom; but the humble have their eyes cast down to their infirmity, sin, and foolishness. Therefore, a bringing down shall attend the proud, and glory shall be the portion of the humble: as we have it, Prov. xxix. 23, “A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.” And we have the same, Prov. xvi. 18. O what words! O what weighty scriptures!

Ver. 28.—*For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will lighten my darkness.*

It is quite clear that this also pertains to the people of Christ; for Christ himself has no darkness that wants lightening. What David says is this, Those proud ones, O Lord, have lofty eyes; and every proud one is to himself a light and a guide; he hears no one, he believes no one, not even God himself, whom, together with all those who are his, he perverts. But thy people are made fools that they may be wise; and, despairing of themselves, they give all glory unto thee, and subject themselves to thy government, willing and wishing to be

directed by thy light : as it is said, Psalm lxxxix. "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." And Psalm iv. "Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us." And again, Psalm xxxii. 8, "I will guide thee with mine eye."

And this the prefigurative journey of the children of Israel sets forth in Exodus ; where they are said to have passed through a horrible desert, in which there were fiery serpents, scorpions, and vipers : as we have it Deut. viii. where it is said, that the children of Israel were not led by their own guiding, but by a cloud, and a pillar of fire by night : that is, by divine illumination. Thus also Jerusalem arose with Christ and was illumined, because its light was come and the glory of the Lord was risen upon it ; so that even the gentiles should walk in its light, and kings in the brightness of its rising : as we have it, Isaiah lx. 19, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day ; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee ; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

Concerning this light sufficient has been said, Psalm iv. that it is the Word of the Gospel : as Peter saith, 2 Epist. i. 19, "We have a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." For in the midst of so many perturbations within and without, and, as it were, under and in the midst of this most dark tempest, we have no other star to steer by than the Word of God, by which all who are preserved and saved steer their course. And what is this "candle" of ours which is lighted by the illumination of the Word ? It is without doubt our heart ; and whether you call it the conscience, or the understanding, it is all one and the same thing.

And observe here, there is nothing ascribed to natural guidance, or the general prudence of the flesh ; for David in open words here calls all that prudence and human guidance which is without the operation of the Word, "darkness ;" and this is the darkness that he prays to

have enlightened by the light of the Word; the meaning of which, he who is in the midst of temptations easily receives and understands. For such an one knows, that universal reason can give him no counsel at all. Nay, he knows that the wiser any one is, the greater fool he is when in the midst of perils. It is the Word of God only that sustains a man and tells him what to do,—namely, that he is to trust in God, and to expect deliverance and salvation from him. As it now follows,

Ver. 29.—*For by thee I shall be delivered from temptation: and by my God have I leaped over the wall.*

“By thee,” not by myself; by thee, as my guide and illuminator, not by myself as a runner or a worker, shall I escape out of temptations; knowing, that all things are in thy hands, and that counsel is to be expected from thee: so we have it, Psalm xlv. 34, “For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them. Thou art my king, O God, command deliverances for Jacob. Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me,” &c. Here, behold! the church of Christ knows nothing of the secular arm, which the ungodly and impious popes have recourse to and embrace at this day, and which they call in to their own aid, and fear it when they see it in the hands of others.” How far do their lives and opinions agree with the holy scriptures! A pretty harmony, truly!

Hieronymus, 2 Sam. xxii. renders it, ‘For by thee I shall run armed: and by my God I shall leap over the wall.’ He takes this metaphor from courageous soldiers in battle. For this word *accinctus*, ‘armed’ or ‘girded about,’ which in the Hebrew is GEDUD, is rendered, 2 Kings xxiv. *latrunculus*, ‘a little robber,’ which we render ‘soldiers,’ or ‘bands.’ For it is there said, ver. 2, “And the Lord sent against him bands (*latrunculos*) of

the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon." David means to say, therefore, By the confidence communicated by thy illumination I shall fear the attack of no one, I shall fight against every kind of enemies, I shall leap over the wall, and shall surmount every difficulty that may be thrown in my way, that is, I who am weak in myself shall be mighty and invincible in thee: and as Paul glories, Philip. iv. 13, "I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me." And again, 2 Cor. ii. 14, "Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ."

Hence "a wall" does not in this place signify sins, or at least not sins only, but also the power of any enemy; against which the church of Christ fights by faith in God; just as in circumstances of war we fight against the wall of the enemy. And towers and walls in the scripture signify the leaders, defenders, elders of the people: as in Psalm cxxii. 7, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy towers:" that is, in the rulers and elders of the church. And Isaiah xlix. 16, "Thy walls are continually before me." And so here, David says "the wall," for walls: that is, all the power of this world: in which that strong man armed keeps his palace in peace, until a stronger than he come and cast him out.

And he expressively says, "I shall leap over." He does not say I shall lay waste or destroy: because, the power of this is not taken away by the word of faith, but only overcome. So Christ did not take away the kingdom of Cæsar, but erected only a more sublime kingdom of truth. And Paul says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers:" that is, as to the flesh: for the same Apostle asserts that all believers, according to the Spirit, are free in Christ. And in like manner, Peter, 2 Epist. chap. ii. rebukes all despisers of dominions and dignities: and yet, he declares openly the liberty of a Christian. Thus, we overcome all things; and then most especially, when we feel ourselves the most oppressed.

Ver. 30.—*As for my God, his way is perfect: the Word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

This pronoun “my” is not in the Hebrew, it is only “God:” which is the idiom of the Hebrew, and is the same as if we said ‘God’s way is perfect:’ for the Hebrew expression is, as if we should say in Latin, *Dei impolluta via ejus*.

David here goes on with a sweet affection (because he is happy in God) to commend the words of God also, just as he had hitherto commended his works; and this he does both against the works and the words of the ungodly and the proud. For when God shews himself holy with the holy, and strengthens those who trust in him, he does this by giving them a pure conscience. And a pure conscience is joyful and happy. And it is rendered thus pure, not by any works or doctrines of men, but by the law of God and the ways of God: as we have it, Psalm xix. 7, “The law of the Lord is pure, converting the soul.” And such as the Word of God is, such is the way of God: that is, a life according to his Word: and such as this life is, such is the man’s conscience. And the Word of God is like silver tried in the fire, purified seven times; as we have it Psalm xii. And this makes it impossible for the ungodly to rejoice in God: for all things are to them perverse, because their ways are defiled, in which they walk at all times according to the doctrines and commandments of men, and please themselves therein, and ever wrest and drag over the Word of God to these their opinions.

Here, therefore, we are to observe the comparison where the church compares herself with the synagogue throughout, rejoicing in God, who not only approves all the works of the church, but gives unto her the all-pure doctrine of the Word, according to which she lives holy, innocent, and elect. On the other hand, the ungodly synagogue is polluted, and all the words it speaks, and the works it does, are defiled, how different soever things



may appear in the eyes of men. For as the ungodly judge the life, so do they judge the doctrine of the godly, to be defiled; being ignorant of the righteousness of faith which is of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness which is of works: from which, nothing else can follow than a false confidence and presumption. And who among such characters will say with David, "He is the protector of all that trust in him?" For those who walk in the way of God, and cleave to his Word, do not trust in themselves, but in God, by whom alone they are defended: whereas, the former characters defend themselves by their own strength, works, and doctrines. And indeed, the godly have need of God for a protector, because, on account of the undefiled way of the Lord, and the pure words of God, they are always assaulted by the ungodly, and are sought out for destruction.

Ver. 31.—*For who is God save the Lord? or who is God save our God?*

He is the protector of all them that trust in him, because, he has wherewith to protect them, seeing that there is no God besides him who can hurt them. Thus we have it, 1 Sam. ii. 2, "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God." From which place it was that David derived the latter part of this verse, and indeed they are the same words. For Hieronymus does not render *ZUR*, God, but 'strong' or 'rock;' thus: 'And who is a rock save our God?' And the conjunction here ought not to be disjunctive but conjunctive: for the verse is a repetition.

The sense of the verse, therefore, is consolatory to the church against the insults and boastings of this Pennina, this rival synagogue. As if David had said, If he protect, who shall hurt? If God be for us, who shall be against us? Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? Thus, Hannah, 1 Sam. i. said these same things in defending herself against the presumption of her rival: and added, 'Talk no more so exceeding proudly, for by strength shall no man prevail.'

Ver. 32.—*It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

David had before boasted of the pure ways of the Lord, but here he boasts of his own pure or undefiled way. As, then, he had before so abundantly said that he had not wickedly departed from God, and had confessed his righteousness and the cleanness of his hands, why does he again repeat and adduce the same things, superfluously harping, as it would appear, upon the same string?—I have before observed, that, according to my opinion, the prophet is here singing, in the person of Christ, of the state of the primitive church, until the calling in of the gentiles. And therefore, Christ the church's head is introduced in the beginning; and then the preaching, and the rising of the church among the Jews; and then there is a comparison of this church with the reprobate synagogue that was left, who boasted of their own righteousness, laughed at and derided the faith of the church, and at length opposed and persecuted her, just as Pharaoh oppressed the children of Israel that they might not be multiplied.

And now David seems to be singing of the progress and multiplying of the church;—that the more the ungodly opposed her, the more the faithful multiplied. And that this is the Psalmist's meaning that which follows will plainly shew. For that strength, with which the church here says that she is guided, is that which is applied to a multitude or an army: as we have it, Isaiah lx. 5, "Because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the gentiles shall come unto thee;" that is, a great strength or power; that is, a great multitude of the gentiles. And again, we have it, Exod. xv. 4, 'Pharaoh and his strength hath he cast into the sea.' Hence this Hebrew word HEIL is often used to signify 'armies,' which here and in other places is rendered "strength." Thus the Latins say, *magnum vim pecuniarum, hominum, equorum, &c.* when they want to express a great quantity or number. Therefore, for the church to be girt or encompassed with strength, is

nothing more than that which Luke says, Acts ii. 47, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." And Acts v. 14, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

And what David says concerning his ways being undefiled, is the same as that which he had said before, that the ways of the Lord were pure and undefiled; for his ways and the ways of the Lord were the same; because he walked in the ways of the Lord, and not in his own, which were not the ways of the Lord; for it was in these latter ways (namely their own) that the synagogue walked: as Isaiah says, chap. liii. 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have walked every one in his own way." And Gen. vi. 12, "All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." Wherefore, for the way of the church to be made or manifested (as the Hebrew has it) to be undefiled, is, for it to be approved and confirmed to be such, by many pursuing and walking in it: for if this were not the case, as there are so many ungodly who declare it to be injurious and defiled, it would soon fail altogether.

Wherefore, it is necessary that it should be in the church, as it was figuratively, Exod. i. 7, "And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty." And again, ver. 12, "But the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew." And therefore David here more appropriately says "my way:" because, by the example of the church walking in the way of the Lord, many were drawn into that way. For the church herself, among the apostles, received the way of the Lord from God himself, without any medium: but the rest received it by the ministry and the example of the apostles, and of their disciples who preached. And this is what God perpetually keeps up in the church,—to have all taught indeed by himself only, and yet, to draw them by the ministry, the words, and the examples of his ministers, and to lead them by the medium of the

“ways” of the church into his own “ways,” which are the same.

Ver. 33.—*Who maketh my feet like hinds’ feet, and setteth me upon high places.*

Hieronymus here, and 2 Sam. xxii. renders it ‘Making my feet equal unto hinds’ feet, and setting me upon my high places.’—I know that upon former occasions I have explained “feet” as signifying the affections of the mind and the motions of the heart: as in Psalm xiv. “Their feet are swift to shed blood:” and this exposition will hold good in many places of the scripture, and perhaps here also.—But I will take the boldness to indulge in my thoughts here a little farther, and to understand the “feet” of the church in a way somewhat different, so that the whole may be made to harmonize, for we are carried along by the Spirit with the mind of David.—This verse seems to me to give a reason of the preceding, in which he said that his “way” was strengthened and increased by the imitation of many: which is accomplished in no other way than by the ministry of the Gospel, which does not gather together so many, and that so rapidly, into the church, without a great miracle of divine power: seeing that, the way of the Lord in which the church walks is in every way opposed to all the wisdom of the flesh, and cannot be judged to be “undefiled” by any men unless God change their hearts: and this God does, where he does it, by the incredible velocity of the Word.

The “feet” of the church therefore are the ministry of the Word, or (if you wish to have it so) of the Gospel. Thus, Paul, writing to Timothy, said, ‘I have finished my course.’ And Acts xx. 24, ‘So that I might finish my course, and the ministry of the word which I have received.’ And Gal. xxii. “Lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain.”—Of these feet the vision of Ezekiel speaks, where he describes the feet of the four living creatures as “straight feet,” Ezekiel i. 7. And Isaiah lii. whom Paul adduces, Rom. x. says,

“ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good ! ” That is, how sweet is that preacher, that proclaims grace and the remission of sins ! And Micah says, chap. liv. 13, “ Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion : for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass. ” And again, Isaiah xxxii. 20, “ Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass. ” And there are many other passages similar to these in the scriptures. And hence, an ox in the barn-floor treading out the corn, signifies a Gospel minister : as Paul saith, 1 Cor ix. “ Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. ”

The swiftness of the stag is well known ; and this is ascribed to the Word, Psalm cxlvii. 15, “ His word runneth very swiftly. ”

But what are these “ high places ” upon which the Lord set David ? And what is the agreement between these “ feet ” and these “ high places ? ” and between this swiftness and this standing ? Some here understand those heavenly things in which the church is placed. But I think he is still referring to the “ feet. ” For the Hebrew expression is ‘ he hath made me to stand, ’ which is the proper office of feet. Wherefore, I think that what is here said is simply that of Isaiah xl. 9, “ O Zion, that bringest good tidings, ” get thee up into the high mountain : O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength : lift it up, be not afraid ; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God. ” And it is with the same mind that he adds, chap. lii. “ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings. ” And perhaps this figure was also borrowed from the nature of stags, who exercise their young in running, and teach them how to manage their flight ; in doing which they take them up into craggy mountains and shew them how to leap. Hence this running and this standing of the “ feet, ” do not contradict or differ from each other : for Ezekiel also is described as having walked and having stood.

And these high places, or mountains, or craggy heights, I understand in no other way than as signifying the crowds of many people, in the midst of whom the preacher stands, and firmly and with confidence and constancy declares the Word of God. And this not of human power: for Christ says in the last chapter of Luke, ‘and ye shall be endued with power from on high.’ Hence it is that David says here, ‘He made me to stand.’ Thus Peter, Acts ii. lifts up his voice to the Jews. And Paul, in many places, does the same before the people. And Christ, Psalm lxxxii. stands ‘in the midst of the gods.’ And this standing Isaiah again clearly sets forth in that glorious exhortation of his. And it is evident that crowds or multitudes of people are mountains in many places of the scriptures. Thus Jeremiah in his last chapter calls Babylon a mountain. And every church is called a mountain: even as the universal church is called the mountain of the Lord, Psalm lxviii. and Isaiah xi. &c.—And the Hebrew here has it “my high places:” in which he points out the providence and will of God, which causes that the ministry of the Word should profit none but those who were ordained to be called unto the church. Or, simply, he thus names the different select churches “mountains,” or “high places.”

*Ver. 34.—He teacheth my hands to war: and thou hast made as a brazen bow my arms.*

David here goes on to commend the words of God, and the power of them, for they are not only undefiled and tried in the fire; nor do they only teach and convert many unto the faith by the ministry of the preachers, (as he has hitherto said,) but they are mighty through God, (as Paul teaches, 2 Cor. x.) to the pulling down of strong holds, destroying imaginations and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ. Thus Paul, in his Epistle to Titus, told him that a bishop should be able not only by sound doctrine to exhort, but to convince, the gainsayers: and that he would do this

only by faithful speech, which is according to sound doctrine, and not by human reasonings and inventions. And this is what David here means when he saith, "He teacheth my hands to war." For the church is not engaged in the battle of the world by the sword; she has her own battle, which I have already adduced out of Paul; and this battle is against the adversaries of the Word: and unless the Lord in the battle against these teach our hands to war, and give us arms of brass, we shall enter the field in vain. For even Moses and Aaron could not overcome Jannes and Jambres but by the finger of God. Out of human reasonings nothing arises but human contentions, envyings, sects, &c. as the same Paul teaches.

Every one will of course understand that this allegory is taken out of warlike matters, where the fray is carried on with hands and arms: and that it signifies nothing else, than that the preachers of the Word are instructed from on high, and endued with an indefatigable and invincible power of teaching the Word, to the confusion of all the adversaries; even as Christ promised it should be. "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." And so, Acts vi. 10, "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake." And this Gamaliel, Acts v. 39, confessed, saying, "If this work be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

Ver. 35.—*Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath upholden me, and thy gentleness hath multiplied me.*

The church here, with pious gratitude, ascribes all that victory which she had gained over her adversaries by her hands that were taught to fight, and with her arms of brass not to herself, but unto him by whom alone she gained it. As if she had said, My not yielding in this battle of godliness, and the doctrine of pure faith being preserved safe, was, because thou wast my salvation, and because thy favour preserved me. By this miracle, therefore, I see, that it was of thy kindness

only that the enemy was conquered and the number of my followers increased.

But that this battle of doctrines is so great and so perilous, no one can easily believe but he who has had some experience in these things. We see with what a power of the spirit, and with what solicitude Paul himself toiled in this battle in all his Epistles to the Galatians: and thereby he arms us. For the old serpent is most crafty and most easily deceives the hearts of the simple: nay, whom does he not deceive? And the difficulty is increased by this,—that the doctrine of the church is beyond all human attainment: for unless God himself teach it us, preserve it in us, triumph in it for us, and increase it, all the forces of the adversary, his multitude, his magnitude, his force, his eloquence, his ability, his learning, will be too much for us. Therefore, the salvation of them that believe, and the confusion of them that gainsay, is all of the right hand of a sustaining and defending God.

Hence it is, that above all things Paul is so much in prayer with God for the churches, that God would guard and preserve the hearts and the understandings of the faithful, that their minds may not be corrupted by the craft of the serpent and the wickedness of men: knowing that, of herself, the church could not accomplish it by the words themselves, even though they be God's words, and the arms which she has received from God.—It is therefore of grace and a mercy to be taught unto the battle, but a much greater grace to conquer in battle, so as to preserve the citizens and conquer the enemies, and to increase the prosperity of the church, not to defend it only. Who therefore are we, that we should presume to defend the truth and overcome the adversaries, and to feel enraged if we cannot do it. It is of the divine mercy only to accomplish this preservation and increase, and not of our presumption; that glory may be unto God alone!

Ver. 36.—*Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.*

The adversaries of the Word being now vanquished,



and the Word of God being confirmed, and the faithful being preserved and increased by him, they are not only not lessened and diminished, which the adversaries wished, but their slips are enlarged and strengthened, which was wrought by the goodness of God comforting the church even against the wills of the oppressors; because many more have come into the church by their means than there were before she was oppressed by them: as I have before shewn from the figure of the children of Israel.

“That my footsteps did not slip,” or ‘were not weakened,’ is the same thing in a way of repetition: that is, they were most powerfully strengthened, though the ungodly endeavoured to weaken them. For I have before observed, that the negative is more powerful than the affirmative in the holy scriptures.

But why does David call them *his* steps and *his* footsteps, when they are the footsteps and the ways of God? This I have shewn above. For the church, by her example, makes the ways of God her ways; and, before men, where example only prevails, it appears to be the ways of the church only: but it is known by faith, that the whole is the work of God.

*Ver. 37.—I will pursue mine enemies and overtake them: neither will I turn again till they are consumed.*

Here the church expects the wonderful goodness of God, who multiplies while the adversaries diminish, enlarges while they attempt to straiten, and strengthens while they weaken, and she conceives a confidence even of pursuing and utterly subduing them, until she has destroyed them unto utter destruction. And so it has ever been, and so it is now, in every victory of the people of God,—that in the beginning of the war the enemies seem superior and invincible: but by and by she is comforted by an impression upon her mind, and the enemies yield and are destroyed, and she does not cease to follow up the begun battle until every adversary is consumed. Wherefore, this verse sets forth the perseverance evinced in the battle and the gaining of the

victory, and the power of the church, which remains unfainting and unwearied even unto the end. And this the expressions “I will pursue,” “I will overtake,” and “I will not turn again,” plainly shew. For this pursuing does not signify the new beginning of a war, but the accomplishing of it after it is begun. As we have it, “Psalm xxxiv. 14, “Seek peace and pursue it:” that is, follow after it unto the end. And “I will take them” signifies, that they shall be utterly taken and possessed.

This was prefigured in the war of Joshua against the people of Ai, in which the children of Israel were first slain and weakened even unto despair, and then they retreated insidiously until they had drawn the inhabitants far away from the city, and then, turning their faces, they destroyed them unto utter destruction. By which the Spirit signified, that it should come to pass, that the church should appear to flee at first; that is, being weakened according to the flesh by sufferings, should seem to yield; but that, being powerful according to the spirit of faith, she should at length conquer and utterly destroy her enemies. Thus the Arians were strong at first, but at length were consumed unto nothing. But we find it not so in the books of Judges; where it is so often said, that the children of Israel could not destroy the Jebusites.

Ver. 38.—*I will wound them that they shall not be able to rise: they shall fall under my feet.*

The meaning of this is plain from what has preceded,—namely, that he takes the adversaries and cuts them to pieces, so that they, having lost all their strength cannot rise up nor resist him that slayeth them. For this verse describes the weakness of the adversaries, as the verses preceding do the strength of the church. For to fall under one’s feet is, in a figurative way of expression, simply for the adversaries to be humbled and converted to the faith. Here, therefore, let the reader understand by “feet,” if he is so inclined, the ministry of the Word: as Luke says in the Acts, ‘And many of the elders became obedient unto the faith.’ If

the verse be so received, then, to fall under the feet, will be, to obey the Gospel.

Ver. 39.—*For thou hast girded me with strength to the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.*

Here again is set forth that strength which I mentioned before. “Thou hast girded me with strength:” that is, thou hast surrounded me with the multitude of the faithful. But here he adds, “Unto the battle.” Wherein he glories, that he was not only increased with the multitude of the faithful, but also with a multitude of warriors. For, how many out of the vanquished and conquered adversaries have been converted and made leaders and pastors of churches, and powerful both to build up with sound doctrine and to fight, building with one hand and holding a sword in the other; as we read of Nehemiah. And when the warriors are increased in this manner, it is easy to subdue all that rise up against us, and exalt themselves against the power of God; as we see was the case in the primitive state of the Jews.

Ver. 40.—*Thou hast given unto me the backs of mine enemies, and thou hast destroyed them that hate me.*

Hitherto David has been speaking of those Jews, who, being conquered and humbled by the Word, came into the strength of the church. Now he is speaking of the reprobate and those that persevere in unbelief: these he calls enemies and haters: for the church never endured any hatred more terrible than by the very Jews themselves. And observe the propriety of the words; thou hast given me their “backs,” and hast destroyed them. These are terrible words. The synagogue is conquered and flees, and the church conquers it and pursues: for this is to have the backs of the enemies given unto us: as we have it, Gen. xlix. 8, ‘Judah, thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies.’

But this is a miserable state,—that the synagogue should always remain with a face set against the church:

that is, in perpetual hatred. It will not acknowledge the church, neither indeed can, and it bears a perpetual hatred against her: and yet, it can avail nothing nor do any thing to hurt her: it always flees before her, and is compelled to yield. And this is just what we see going on before our eyes among the Jews at this day. So that their state and condition could not possibly be more aptly described in a few words than we here have it;—that they always have their backs turned, and are given up to hate and to do evil. And that they are “destroyed,” (or, as our translation has it, ‘dispersed,’) we can more clearly see than read. And now, that which follows is more terrible still.

Ver. 41.—*They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.*

Thus it is said of these same, Prov. i. 28; “Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.” Here we have marked out the all-vain pursuits and the unprofitable devotedness of the synagogue, by which they believe that they serve God and please him; whereas, God’s will is that no one shall be saved or heard but by and through Christ who is preached unto them; and so it is written, Acts iv. Wherefore all their labour is in vain; there is no Saviour for them nor any one to hear them: and yet they cease not, being hardened in their presumption: of which miserable state we have many terrible things spoken in the prophets.

Ver. 42.—*I will beat them small as the dust before the wind: I will cast them out as the dust in the streets.*

This beating small and this being made as dust has been fully handled Psalm i.: where we have shewn, that the Jews are bruised to powder with a double bruising, and are made as the dust which the wind scattereth away. For we see them now scattered throughout the whole world, having no certain or quiet resting-place, no kingdom, no government, and no strength or power whatever. But, much more terribly still, they are scat-

tered spiritually into various ungodlinesses, while, setting aside the faith of Christ, they are carried away with various and strange doctrines. And thus they are given up to be trodden under foot by all nations throughout the whole world, like the dust of the streets; which being thus dispersed and made useless, is profitable for nothing whatever but to be trodden under foot: as it is said, Matt. v. of the salt that has lost its savour, that it is good for nothing but to be cast out of doors to be trodden under foot of men. But the Jews, as I said, are beaten to dust by a double trampling. They are made subject to and despised by all, corporally, like the dust of the streets, and they are trampled under foot, spiritually, by devils, through base and shameful doctrine.

Observe the emphasis in these words, "dust," and "the dirt of the streets." Whereas, the elect are represented as solid, good, and fruitful earth; not as dust driven away by the winds. They are described as precious stones, valuable, and polished; not as the vile dirt that is without any utility whatever. Thus, as dust and dirt are devoid of every thing that is useful, so the reprobate have nothing left in them that is profitable for any one thing.

Ver. 43.—*Thou wilt deliver me from the strivings of the people; and thou wilt make me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me.*

Here Christ speaks in his own person. Though all that was said before may perhaps refer to his own person; in that he himself does all things, and causes his church to do the same. Here, however, he clearly prophesies of the rejection of the synagogue and the calling in of the gentiles. Thus, Haggai ii. 7, Christ is called "The desire of all nations." And Isaiah xi. 10, "And in that day there shall be a root out of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the gentiles seek." And we have the same prophecies in many other places of the scriptures. And Paul cites many of them together with the last-mentioned verse, Rom. 15.

And it is in a cutting way that he says, "from the

strivings (or contradictions) of the people." Wherein he commends the righteousness of God, and sets in a still more awful light the sin of the Jews. As if he had said, There is nothing in this bitter and hardened people but strivings and contradictions.

And here it is to be observed, that the prophet speaks, not of beginning, but of persevering ungodliness, and the punishment that awaits it. Just as, before, he had spoken of persevering godliness.

And that no one might think that he would become the head of the nations of that same contradicting people, Christ explains himself still more clearly, and entirely distinguishes the gentiles or nations that he means from the Jews: saying, "A people whom I have not known shall serve me." This he added that they might no longer boast that God was known only among the Jews: as we have it, Deut. xxxii. 21, "They have moved me to jealousy by that which was not God: and I will move them to jealousy by those which are not a people: I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." And Hosea i. 10, "And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there it shall be said unto them, Ye are sons of the living God."

When Christ says here "I know not," Augustine refers it to the personal presence of Christ in which he visited the Jews. But it is better to refer it to all those things which he made known to and exhibited before the Jews: such as, the law, the promises, the miracles, signs, &c. which Paul enumerates, Rom. ix. which things he did not make known to the nations, and with respect to which things he knew the Jews only.

*Ver. 44.—In the hearing of the ear he has obeyed me: the strange children have lied unto me.*

Christ here compares the obstinate perfidy of the Jews with the prompt faith of the gentiles. The former, though honoured with many signs and displays of power, instructed by the law and the prophets, and at last called by Christ and his apostles when teaching, yet, after

all, they would not come unto the faith. Whereas, none of these things were exhibited before the gentiles; nothing but the hearing and the sound of the Gospel came unto them, and this they directly obeyed, because God had so ordained it. And this is that promptness of faith which Christ commends in such expressive words, "In the hearing of the ear they shall hear me (as the Hebrew has it):" because it was by hearing the Word only by the ear, that the gentiles believed; when they had no prophets nor any king.

This "hearing" is a figurative expression, used by the Spirit to signify the voice of the Word itself: as we have it, Isaiah liii. 1, "Lord, who hath believed our report:" that is, the Word which we preach to be heard; and so again, Habak. ii. 2, "O Lord, I have heard thy hearing, (that is thy audible Word,) and was afraid." And this propriety of speech is very beautiful: because the Spirit seems to indicate a double mystery. First, that the Word of God is such, that if you do not shut up, as it were, all your other senses and receive it only by the hearing, and believe in it, you cannot receive it. As Isaiah saith, vii. 9, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." For the Word of God makes men fools and blind in themselves; or, as the Apostle says, brings every thought into captivity unto Christ. And, with the same figure of speech, Christ said to the pharisees, 'My word is not in you.' But to the understanding of these things no one ever comes but in the day of tribulation, when a man is made destitute of all counsel whatever, and simply cleaves to the Word, and becomes teachable by, and attentive unto, the divine hearing.

Hence, we have this complaint in the scriptures concerning the people of the Jews, that they were dull of hearing, and did not incline their ears nor obey the voice of the Lord. Because, in the day of tribulation, they did not become teachable and submissive to the Word of God, but would rule themselves by their own counsels and their own eyes: that is, they did not believe, but like a horse or a mule had no understanding.

Therefore, I know not what words could more aptly describe the act of faith (as we term it) than this circumlocution of the Holy Spirit. “In (or by) the hearing of the ear, he heard me (or obeyed me.)” That is, this people of the gentiles were fools unto themselves, that they might believe me in those things which they could neither see nor understand.

The other mystery contained in these words is, that, in the church it is not enough for books to be written and read, but it is necessary that they should be spoken and heard. Hence, Christ wrote nothing, but said all things: and the apostles wrote few things, but spoke a great deal. Thus, when David might have said, Psalm xix. 4, ‘Their book is gone out into all the earth:’ he rather said, ‘Their sound is gone out into all the earth:’ that is, their living voice: not the scriptures, but the spoken words. And again, ver. 2, “There is neither speech nor language where their voice is not heard:” observe that—he says, “where their *voice* is not heard:” he does not say, Where their books are not read. For the ministry of the New Testament was not written upon dead tables of stone, but it was to be in the sound of the living voice. Hence, it is said in other places, “God has spoken in his holiness (or holy place, or saint.)” And now *he* speaks in his church, who before wrote in the synagogue, and by his scriptures promised the Gospel, Rom. i.: but it is by the living Word that he accomplishes and fulfils the Gospel. Hence, we are to be more anxious that there should be good preachers than good writers in the church. And it is in this sense that St. Paul saith to the Galatians, chap. iv. 20, “I desire to be present with you now and to change my voice: for I stand in doubt of you.” Because he knew that many things may be more effectually handled by the voice than they can possibly be in writing.

“Strange children lie unto me.”—He calls them strange who have esteemed and alienated themselves from Christ, and have become unbelieving: for this is what the Hebrew word in this place signifies. He here tacitly commends the fathers, and reproves their dege-



nerate children. They are indeed the children of their fathers according to the flesh, but they are strangers according to the spirit: because they follow not the footsteps of their fathers. Concerning whom we may consider the fourth Psalm to speak, when it says, "O ye sons of the man, (that is, of men, of the patriarchal men) how long will ye turn my glory into shame?"

But we have, moreover, 'have lied unto me;' that is, have become liars unto me, while they boast of being the heirs of the fathers and the people of God, while their conduct exhibits every thing but that. Whereas, on the contrary, the people of the gentiles, who glory neither in their fathers nor in the worship of God, have become the dear servants of God, and do the truth in faith, and thereby shew themselves to be the people of God. But those who believe not and hold not the truth of God, remain always liars, because it is faith alone that can make a man a man of truth. This shews forth therefore the perfidy and obstinacy of the Jews,—that they not only err, but even set up error for the truth and defend it.

Ver. 45.—*The strange children have grown old, and have halted out of their ways.*

For while they lie and obstinately resist the truth, and contradict it, they are not only not renewed in the spirit of their mind, but become hardened and irrevocably fixed in their opinions. As we have it, Psalm iv. 2, "How long will ye love vanity and seek after lying?" This we see abundantly fulfilled in the Jews.

"And have halted out of their ways." This passage in 2 Sam. xxii. and in the translation of Hieronymus, we read thus, 'And they shall be contracted in their straits:' and others render it, 'And they shall halt out of their bonds.' The meaning, however, is, that the Jews who have despised faith and cast away from the liberty of Christ, are given up to a reprobate mind, so that they shall entangle themselves in their own doctrines as if in certain chains or bonds, and shall afflict and butcher themselves therein, and yet shall never walk aright, but shall always halt: so that destruction and misery shall

be in their ways. And the same thing is found Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12, "But my people would not hearken unto my voice: and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels." And Prov. i. 31, "Therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

And this self-justifying state of the Jews could not be more aptly and significantly set forth than thus,—that they are contracted in their straits. For we see how scrupulous and captivated in conscience all such are: so much so, that they fear where there is no fear: so narrow and straitened a way do they make to themselves both by their opinions and their traditions: they never know any rest, they are always scrupulous, always in fear. These characters Paul beautifully sets forth, Coloss. ii. 21, 22, where he laughs at their sayings, 'Touch not; taste not; handle not; which are to perish with the using. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom.' Thus are they defiled by their own ordinances: This is not lawful and that is not lawful. In short, nothing is lawful with them but to be impious towards God and men. And all the religious rites and ways of life in our day are examples of this.

These therefore always err in their heart, and have not known the ways of the Lord, as we have it Psalm x. and these also Elijah prefigured, 1 Kings xviii. when he said to the Baalites in rebuking them, "How long will ye halt between two opinions?" For they halt, because they only walk on one or the other foot, and never walk rightly on both: and yet, as they move on in this way, they are like people that walk somehow. And this is just the case with them, while they walk in an ungodly mind and in the letter of servitude, presuming that by their works and self-formed ways they serve God.

Ver. 46.—*The Lord liveth, and blessed be my God, ana exalted be the God of my salvation.*

Having now finished the history or rather prophecy of the church, he returns back to praise and bless God.

For we may understand these to be the words and feelings of one praising. "The Lord liveth:" that is, (as he would say) to him only belong life and blessing: in the same way as we frequently say, 'To God alone belong glory and honour!' Thus the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi. 16, "Who only hath immortality." So he alone 'lives,' and he alone is 'blessed:' and so, he is the only one who is worthy to be exalted, that all glory may be to him alone.

In these words also David tacitly inveighs against the perfidy of the Jews, who seek life, and blessing, and glory by their straits of their self-formed ways: whereas, life, blessing, and glory, are to be ascribed unto God alone, and to be received from him. Hence David continually saith the God of my salvation: that is, who saves me, for I save not myself by my own powers. This is a most frequent expression, like "the God of my righteousness," as we have it Psalm iv; that is, the God that justifies me.

"Blessed be my God.—In the Hebrew here we have ZURI; which sometimes signifies rock, and sometimes is rendered strength; as we have seen in the beginning of this Psalm, "My God (or my strength) I will hope in him." And so also here, David praises God as being him in whom he knows and confesses his strength to be placed, and not in himself.

And we may also receive this verse as breathing the feelings of one glorying, and that in the contempt of those who are contracted in their own straits; because they ascribe not life, nor blessing, nor strength, nor glory unto God; and so, they ascribe not their salvation unto him: whereas that can be had no where but in God by the liberty of faith.

Ver. 47.—*God who givest vengeance unto me, and subduest the people under me.*

Here we have "who givest," for 'who giveth;' which, in its usual way, can be understood in two senses. First, "Thou givest vengeance unto me:" that is, thou avengest me: as we have it Psalm cx. 1, "Until I make thine

enemies thy footstool." Secondly, ' he giveth vengeance unto me : ' he giveth me to take vengeance, because he is appointed judge of the quick and dead. And John v. 27, saith, " And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man." Where it is taught, that Christ did not glorify himself nor revenge himself. And this was for an example unto us, that we might not be arrogant nor ambitious. Thus, it is Christ that taketh vengeance on the ungodly Jews, and reigns over the believing people of the gentiles ; being exalted at the right hand of God, and made Lord of all, for this very end.

Ver. 48.—*My deliverer from my angry enemies that rise up against me : deliver me from the wicked man.*

These last four verses seem to be a certain winding up of all those things which have been said throughout the whole Psalm. And therefore, their meaning is quite clear from all that has preceded. When he here says " from the wicked man," (that is, the men of wickedness) it is in the Hebrew ' that HAMAS : ' that is, that injury which hurts and does evil to a neighbour : which he might with propriety have called iniquity : but different translators render it by a different word.

Ver. 49.—*Therefore will I confess unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen : and sing praises unto thy name.*

This verse Paul, as we have said, cites Rom. xv. : which compels us to understand it of Christ. Christ, therefore, being delivered from the Jews who were angry, hostile, wicked, and rose up against him ; and being now known in the church among the gentiles, lauds and sings praises unto God : that is, he by the gifts of his Spirit being bestowed upon us, causes and constrains us to confess and sing praises unto God. Moreover, when we confess and sing praises unto God, it is an indication that we live, and exist in the church, not by our own righteousnesses, but by the free benefits of God : so that, all glory is given unto the faith and mercy of God only.

Ver. 50.—*Magnifying the deliverances of his King, and shewing mercy to his Anointed, to David, and his seed for ever.*

Great, indeed, are the deliverances by which God saves Christ his King and all his Christians: because he saves them from death, from sin, from hell, and from all evils: and these deliverances and salvations are eternal, and consist in life, righteousness, and glory. For, as to all corporal deliverances, they are of little moment, nay, in comparison, nothing at all: and therefore, we are taught to disregard the mere deliverance of the body, and to seek after being Christians, and the attainment unto those great and eternal deliverances. For under the New Testament we have there great deliverances, even as under the Old they had those smaller deliverances temporal.

And this is the same thing where David next says, “shewing mercy unto his Anointed.” For all these salvations are not given unto men for any merit or deserving them, but only by the free mercy of God. Hence by Christ here we are to understand that only One in whom mercy was permitted to be shewn: and hence it is that it is said, that mercy was shewn him, that is, fulfilled in him.

“To David, and his seed for ever.” As this is the concluding part of the verse, it seems to me to say, that the deliverances in that King, and the mercy in that Anointed have been fulfilled; that David and his seed might be satisfied: to whom the promise concerning the King and the Christ of the God of Jacob was made, as we have it in the last chapter, 2 Sam. And hence all that in the former part of the verse is said to have been done in Christ, is to be understood as having been done to David, and his seed for ever: as we have it, Isaiah lv. 3, ‘I will give unto thee the sure mercies of David.’ Of which Luke speaking, Acts xiii. 34, and adducing it, says, “I will give you the sure mercies of David:” that is, eternal salvations and mercies. For the prophets dwelt on, and clave to, these promises of God; and they

continually repeat and inculcate them ; nay, enlarge upon and explain them ; because they are necessary unto all that are saved ; for it is in these promises alone that all salvation is placed, and not in any precepts or works.

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## PSALM XIX.

TO VICTORY : A PSALM OF DAVID.

Ver. 1.—*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.*

PAUL, Rom. x. teaches and compels us to understand this Psalm of the Gospel ministry : where he says, “ Have they not heard ? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.” Hence we must here receive the heavens, firmament, sun, days, nights, and the like, as having an allegorical signification : for the Holy Spirit being wrapped up in these sweet things, draws us away from this visible world to contemplation of a certain new world, in which there are other heavens, nights, days, &c. of which we see only the figure and shadow in this world. And to this understanding of the Psalm we are compulsively led, both by the evident circumstances and consequences of the things themselves which are recorded, and also by the authority of the New Testament : for all these things lead us to see the allegory, which, in other cases is always to be avoided by an interpreter of the scriptures as much as possible, lest he should lose the simple sense and meaning, and wander away after his own dreams. For I have often observed, that it is not lawful in the scriptures to play with allegories, (at least when we are in controversy) unless the allegory can be proved by other places of the scriptures.

I have also before observed, that the Spirit is some-

times wont to use allegorical words when he is speaking of allegorical things (so to speak). Thus we have the kings of the earth described as being bruised with a rod of iron, Psalm ii. : whereas the gospel is sweet and soft, and yet it appears iron to the flesh : here, therefore, the Holy Ghost is speaking of a glorious thing in inferior and humble terms. But here, on the contrary, in a sublimity of stile, he speaks with the grandest expression, of those things which are vile in the eyes of men : and, proceeding in a figurative strain of language, he calls throughout the whole Psalm those things heavens which are the refuse and dregs of the earth : and the whole is as it were a living allegory, which seems to be one thing but means another.

These "heavens," then, are the apostles, and as many as discharge the apostolic ministry : that is, the office of the Word. And here in this sublime eloquence we shall see set forth unto us what the Gospel is, and what it is to be an apostle or a bishop in the church, and also what kind of a man he ought to be who wishes to become a bishop.

First of all, they ought to be ' the heavens, the firmament.'—What power, I pray you, is there not here required in the ecclesiastical ministry? The "heavens" are the throne and the habitation of God : as Isaiah saith, lxvi. 1, " The heaven is my throne." A high-priest, therefore, of the church of God ought to have God inhabiting and dwelling in him, that he may be blameless, adorned with all that sound doctrine which Paul has set forth, 1 Tim. i. and Titus i. : he ought to live upon the earth a heavenly life, and with a conversation becoming one who is the habitation of God : under which purity he may be instructed from above, be ready and willing to be taught of God, that he may deliver to earthly men those things which are God's, not his own.

And next, he is to be a "firmament" in the midst of the waters : (for so it pleased God that the heavens should be called, Gen. ii. 6, on account of the mysteries that were to come.) Because, a bishop and a minister

of the Word ought to be firm in the faith, seeing that he is placed in the midst of the waters of affliction for the Word's sake : and he ought not to yield either to superiors or inferiors, nor to be moved by adversity nor prosperity. These things, therefore, shew how the person is to be furnished, so as to be holy unto God and firm among men. For, if he be an hireling, he will flee and will not be a firmament, but a cloud without water, or a wandering vapour.

And again, the duty of these, is to "declare the glory of God, and to shew forth his handy work." This is expressed in plain words, without any figure : and therefore, we are compelled to understand by "heavens" here some men, because the visible heavens cannot "declare" and "shew forth" these things ; for they have neither voice, nor tongue, unless we understand it in an allegorical sense. Hence you see, that to the apostles and their successors it was committed, not to write only, but to speak with a living voice in the church. For this state of things, therefore, it is plain, that all our bishops and priests, who are at this day so called, are not true bishops and priests, nor would be even if they were to say over all the prayers and all the masses of their church in one day. For the office of true bishops and priests is not to read canonical forms of prayer, nor to attend masses, nor to bawl out as they do in the church, nor to make a noise with organs, and to fill all things with loud inanimate noises, nor, indeed, to perform miracles, nor to adorn their lives with those excellent works, devotions, and exercises, (for it is quite enough to let a good example shine before others,) but, to "declare" and "shew forth" to others, and to serve them in the Word. But where are we to find the bishops and priests that do this? Nor is it enough to declare and shew forth what they please ; (such as the glory of men, or the works of men's hands ;) but their office is to declare and shew forth the works of God's hands : that is, the Gospel only. For what is the Gospel but a declaring of the glory of God and his works? that is, Jesus Christ the Son of God? And this we shall see, if we search into the scriptures



to know what the glory of God and the works of his hands are.

Paul, 1 Cor. i. 24, 25, ' But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But unto the saints who are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.' For righteousness, truth, wisdom, power, holiness, salvation, and all good, are of God alone : but unto us belong iniquity, foolishness, lying, infirmity, and every evil : all which things are abundantly proved in the scriptures, and we have set them forth with sufficient fulness in the preceding Psalms. The scriptures say, " All men are liars." " O Israel, thy destruction is from thyself." Hence all are destitute and come short of the glory of God ; and no flesh can glory in his sight ; as Paul saith, Rom. iii. And Christ is made unto us of God righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, and by him the glory of God dwelleth in our land, and righteousness looketh down from heaven : that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. " For God the Father of all mercies hath blessed us with all heavenly and spiritual blessedness : " but it is only in Christ, Ephes. i.

Wherefore, the glory of God cannot be declared unless the baseness and vileness of man be declared at the same time. Nor can we preach forth God as true, righteous, and merciful, unless we at the same time set forth men as liars, sinners, and miserable. But if we truly believe that we are such, we shall find salvation, and the mercy of God will reign in us unto his glory. Thus, David says, Psalm li. 4, " Against thee only have I sinned, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings." Hence, there is nothing in us in which we can glory, but every thing that can fill us with confusion : but there is every thing in God in which we can glory and nothing that should leave us confounded.

From which things we gather, that the glory of God is two-fold : namely,—that glory (or glorying) by which we glory in God, when a pure conscience is given us by his free mercy being bestowed upon us ; and that glory by which he is glorified in us, and by us. And for the

glory of God to be declared, is nothing more or less than that being preached and proclaimed in which God is glorified, and in which we glory: that is, the declaring or preaching of all the wonders of his unspeakable mercy, and all the riches of the glory of his loving-kindnesses which have been abundantly shed upon us: to declare which, is, to preach purely Jesus Christ and his blessed Gospel!

Behold, therefore, in how brief an expression the Spirit has spoken forth these great things! And not only is the expression most brief, but most appropriate: for he thereby sets forth not only the things themselves, but the practical use and experience of them. For many preach Christ; but they so preach him, that they never say any thing about, nor indeed understand any thing about, his use and benefits. And this is the case with that herd of canonical ones, who, when they preach Christ at the best, preach only the history of him. But to preach him historically is not to preach Christ; nor is it declaring the glory of God. But if you so preach the history of Christ as to shew, that he is profitable unto men, and that they ought to believe in him unto righteousness and salvation; if you shew that he did all that he did, not for himself, but for us, and that, by the will of the Father; and if you lead us to know that all things that are in Christ are ours;—this faith and this knowledge of the Lord will lead us to love him, to glory in him, and to glorify him. This is a glory, which, though Moses and the prophets knew, yet they did not then declare; but they foretold that it should be declared in due time. The doctrine of the law rather works the glory of men and the shame of God (so to speak): for, by the works of the law, men either become proud and presume, or else, they fall into despair and hate God: this declaration of the glory of God, therefore, belongs to the “heavens.” And hence, this Psalm is one of those places to which Paul refers, when he says, Rom. i. 2, that the Gospel was promised afore by the prophets in the holy scriptures.

Since, therefore, all things that are Christ's are ours,

as the Gospel declares ; and since righteousness is not of the works of the law, but to be ascribed unto grace ; some men think it must naturally follow, (and they thought it was the effect produced by the preaching of the apostles) that we therefore ought no longer to work and do good, nay that we ought to do evil in order that good may come ; that we ought to sin the more that God may be the more glorified ; and that we ought to continue in sin that grace may abound ; and the like !—Such is the reasoning and savour of the wisdom of the flesh, which does not understand the glory of God, being buried and smothered in its own glory ; all which the Apostle fully confutes, Rom. vii. and viii : on which now we have not time to say more.

“ His handy work,” or, ‘ the works of his hands.’ We have here in the Hebrew MAESE ‘ makings’ (*facturæ*,) ‘ fabrications’ (*fabricæ*;) not ‘ actions’ (*actiones*,) or ‘ operations’ (*operationes*,) which are transitive (as we say).—Hereby, therefore, the power of the grace of God is again commended, and our confusion again opened up to us. For these ‘ works of the hands of God’ are the new creatures, the faithful ; speaking of whom, James saith, i. 18, “ Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” And Paul saith, describing these, Gal. vi. 15, “ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” For the Word of the Gospel does not look at the doings, but at the doer ; nor does it look at the gifts, but at the person that offers them. For it is not works that make a man acceptable to God ; but the man that is first acceptable unto God, afterwards does works that please him. Nor does the glory (or glorifying) of God stand in the works that are done, but in the persons that do them. Moses by his law only changes the works, he does not change the doers of the works : and therefore he can only make hypocrites, and justify outwardly and in appearance before men. But the Gospel quickens men and works truth in them.

And that David is here speaking of the works of

the new creation, and not of the creation in general, is manifest from this :—he is prophesying of the Gospel : in which we are taught what we must be made and become. Though, in truth, the creating anew, or the new creation, differs nothing from the old, because they are both created out of nothing ; and every creature is the work of the hands of God ; for they do not serve themselves, nor do they act of themselves, but they are acted upon unto the glory of God alone ; after whose image we must be formed and created.—What, therefore, is declaring the works of the hands of God, but teaching, that the old man must be crucified and the new man put on ? that we must die with Christ and rise again with Christ ? and that thus, the glory of God must be fulfilled in us ?

Here again, you see with what brief and appropriate expression the Spirit speaks forth not only the mysteries of the cross of Christ, but its use and benefits. So that you may here again learn, those are mere fblers who preach the passion of Christ in an historical manner only, teaching nothing at the same time of his use and benefits : which benefits are, that we become thereby ‘ the works of the hands of God.’ Where then will remain free-will ? Where will be found the doctrine ‘ that a man must do what he can ?’ For here it is said that we must *be made*, not that we must *make ourselves* : not that we must work, but that God must work in us : we are the workmanship, not the workmen. Here all the theology of the proud is brought to the ground. And this is the reason why those who “ declare ” these things, must be “ heavens ” and the “ firmament ; ” because they stand opposed to the whole world, and especially to the self-wise, the self-holy, the powerful ; to whose fury and storms of opposition they are not to yield.

Ver. 2.—*Day unto day uttereth forth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*

This verse is handled by various interpreters in various ways : but I shall dismiss all this variety, and follow my own spiritual mind.—David seems here to

declare that which he said in the first verse: to the intent that, no one might imagine or expect that the glory of God and the works of his hands were so to be declared as that they should be things that we should see; nor that those things which should be declared should be visible, in the same manner as we see the glory and the works of the hands of men to be declared and seen; for thus faith would be made void. Therefore, David would be understood as speaking of that glory and those works of God which are not understood but by the Word and by faith. For the glory that is of God alone is not openly seen, nor does what we are made by the hands of God openly appear: they are only believed by faith. Otherwise, what would be the meaning of David's saying that the heavens and the firmament "declare" and "shew forth" those things? For that which is declared is not exhibited to the sight but to the hearing: it is not set before us in deed but in word. Hence David says, that the "heavens" do not declare and set before us the thing but the word; that they do not shew the thing that is known, but produce the knowledge and understanding of it:—that they take away men's eyes, lead captive their senses, make them fools, and leave them saved by the hearing of faith only. Among philosophers, on the contrary, those who declare things seem to themselves to shew forth the thing themselves, and to set for the word only; because it is not the knowledge and understanding that is then effectual, but the knowledge is used to set forth the thing itself; and therefore such are fools in the words and scriptures of God.

David here sets forth in a sweet contrariety the 'days' and the 'nights.'—These days are the heavens here spoken of, the apostles and the firmament: of whom Christ saith, Matt. v. 14, "Ye are the light of the world." And Paul to the Ephesians v. 8, "But now are ye light in the world." And again, Philip. ii. 15, "Among whom ye shine as lights of the world, holding forth the word of life." This "day" is that which is made by the new Sun Christ: and this day

uttereth unto another day: "that is, the world, or, the men of the world, who shine in the light of their wisdom, and are wise in their own eyes. As if he had said, The wisdom of the Spirit preaches and utters to the wisdom of the flesh, that it might take captive the flesh, and make it foolish. For the wisdom of the Spirit is that which is the "day" before God, and the wisdom of the flesh is that which is the "day" before men: that is, each in its place is celebrated, esteemed, and held in honour. Thus we have it, 1 Cor. i. 'Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.'

That such is the meaning, I am inclined to think from this,—because it is written that the Gospel should be preached to those who knew it not. Rom. xv. 21, "To whom he was not spoken of they shall see." When therefore the "day" uttereth the word of the "day:" it does it not to that "day" to which it was uttered, nor unto the "day" itself which uttereth it, but unto another and contrary "day" to which it was not uttered.

And that these days and nights are used allegorically, we are compelled to conclude from these words, "uttereth speech" and "sheweth knowledge." For the natural days and nights do not utter speech nor shew knowledge, nor can they hear or understand. All speech, hearing, knowledge, and understanding, and also uttering and shewing, belong unto men that live upon the earth. And the following verse, where we have "speech" and "language" expressed, confirm the same.

And so also the "night;" that is, the believing apostles shew forth knowledge to the unbelieving world: because it is a repetition of the same thing. For as the believing are light before God and in God; so they are night before the world and in the world; that is, they are obscure and despised; nay, and in their own eyes also they are nothing and mere darkness, for they are not pleasing in their own estimation. On the contrary, the ungodly and unbelieving, as they are light in the world and in their own eyes, appear acceptable in their

own eyes and are pleasing to themselves, but spiritually and in the eyes of God, they are night and darkness. Thus the Apostle says, "For ye *were* once darkness."

The prophet, therefore, here represents four views of things. He describes men as they are in their different lights and situations.—The wicked, he says, are "days" in their own eyes, according to the external man; but they are night in the eyes of God, according to their internal man. And the godly, he shews, are day in the eyes of God, according to their internal man; but night in their own eyes, according to their external man.

And observe here the discrimination of the prophet: how he ascribes the word or speech to the day, and knowledge to the night. Because, it is knowledge that is shewn to the night, that is, to the world, according to the inward man: but it is to the day, that is, to the same world, according to the external man, that the word, or speech, is uttered. For the word "speech" has respect unto the outward hearing, but "knowledge" to the inward understanding. Though he that will, may also by knowledge understand the vocal word to be meant. The meaning of the passage is, therefore, The wise in the spirit shew knowledge to the wise in the flesh: that is, they communicate the knowledge of hidden things by the medium of the Word, which things themselves they do not set before the eyes. Thus, Luke i., John is represented as going before the face of the Lord to give, not salvation, but the knowledge of salvation. Because, our salvation is hid with Christ in God, but the knowledge of it is manifested by the Word.

Ver. 3.—*There are neither speeches nor languages in which their voices are not heard.*

What "their" is here meant? Most certainly the heavens, the days, and the nights, which declare the glory of God and the works of his hands. But where shall we hear these heavens? in what nation? and in what tongues will they speak? David here answers: They shall speak in the tongues of all nations: as the

following verse will shew. And this was fulfilled when the apostles spoke in various tongues the wonderful works of God: and it is still fulfilled throughout the whole world. Because the Gospel, being spread abroad by the apostles in various tongues, still sounds in those same tongues, and will do unto the end of the world: though all may not speak in other tongues as each of the apostles did; nor is that necessary.

This verse stops the mouths of those who say that the apostles all spoke in the same Hebrew tongue, but that each nation or people heard them in their own tongue. But David says here, that there was no speech or language where *their* voices were not heard. If, therefore, the voices were of the apostles, and they were heard by men of all languages, they certainly spoke in various languages: for if they did not speak in various languages the voices were not *theirs*, but the voices of them that heard, or of the intermediate air.

But by what miracle it was that the apostles so spoke forth various languages as not to confound the hearing of the hearers (for the same ear could not hear all languages at once) who can tell! He that enabled them to speak in various tongues, could also cause that each nation should hear their own language without tumult and without any confusion of the tongues: even as Christ spoke from heaven and was heard by Paul only. And this is what Luke says, Acts ii. that the amazed multitude, without any confusion, heard the apostles speak 'every man in his own language.' As if he had said, His own tongue attracted or engaged each man only; and yet they all heard the same apostles, and the apostles spoke in various tongues. For he does not say, They all heard their own tongue: but, They all heard *the apostles speaking* in their own tongue: that is, the apostles were not only *heard* in each nation's own tongue, but they all *spoke* each nation's tongue. Otherwise, what need was there for the apostles to know the Greek tongue, in which they wrote? For the Hebrew would have been sufficient. Indeed, if the opinion above mentioned were true, the apostles would not



have been said to have *spoken* in each nation's tongue, but to have been *heard* in each nation's tongue: and the miracle would not then have been in them that *spoke*, but in them that *heard*: not in the tongues, but in the ears.

But here observe again how David commends faith: for those things which are thus "declared" are not seen, but the voices of the preachers are heard: it is the hearing only that is required in the church of God.

Hieronymus renders the passage thus, 'There are no speeches, no words, in which their voice is not heard.' Here the Hebrew of what Hieronymus renders 'words' is DEBARIM: which sometimes signifies recorded facts, or histories, or reports: but it is not in this sense that the word is to be understood here.

Nor does David here commend faith only, but the efficacy and fruit of the Word. For the apostles are not said to have spoken merely to the wind: but their voices are "heard:" that is, are received and embraced: which takes place by faith.—I here omit to say any thing about that question which many start: asking, Whether this verse can be said to be fulfilled, when all nations have not yet heard the Gospel? Every one can easily answer such a question as that.

Ver. 4.—*Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.*

Here, as I before said, David shews the place where these "heavens" are heard: that no one might complain or have room for any excuse, by saying, that he is not able to get across the sea, or to ascend into heaven in order to hear. Says Moses, Deut. xxx. "The Word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thine heart." It was for this very end that the apostles were gifted with the different tongues, that their sound might go into all the earth.—And observe how very carefully the Holy Spirit expresses himself, and places his words, that the apostles might not be thought to be themselves the authors of the words which they spoke, he here clearly makes them ministers only and instruments.

As Christ says, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of my Father that speaketh in you." And again, 'He glorifieth me and beareth witness of me: and ye also shall bear witness of me.' Hence it is that David says, "Their voices are heard; but it is another that speaketh in them." Their sound goeth forth, but it is another that speaks and sends it forth, using as instruments their mouths and words.

Although the Hebrew has it 'their line' (or 'rule') is gone out into all the earth,' yet the Apostle, Rom. x. says, "their sound:" which is indeed the same thing: for the sound of the Gospel is that rule according to which the church is built. For it is not built by the corporal arms of carpenters and masons, but by the Word of life.—And by this word "line" or 'rule' is signified a certain measure: that is, that measure in which the ministry was committed to the apostles to carry throughout the whole world. For they did not all preach in the same place, but were sent in different directions throughout the whole world: not that they might gather its riches unto themselves, but that each might bring his portion unto Christ.

*He hath set his tabernacle in the sun.*

This, in the Hebrew, is the last part of the preceding verse: and the Hebrew is thus, 'He hath set a tabernacle for the sun in them.' Here some receive the sun in a literal signification, as signifying this visible sun. But we must here understand the prophet to proceed with his allegory; and that the "sun" is he who is put into, and who dwells in these heavens: and this the following verse indicates, which is as a bridegroom coming out," &c. The sense is, therefore, he hath set Christ, who is the Sun of righteousness, (as it is said Malachi iv. that the Sun of righteousness shall arise in them that fear him, with healing in his wings,) in his apostles. For it is he that illuminates them, speaks in them, works in and by them, and is all things in them.

For we see that in these spiritual heavens also the Sun is their glory and their whole life and substance.

Because, as, when the sun is sunk below the horizon and darkness is over all things, instead of the heavens appearing, there is nothing but an obscure chaos: so the apostles and their successors, if they had not Christ dwelling in them, would be a real chaos and not "heavens." Hence this verse gives us the reason of what precedes,—that all these glorious things which are spoken of these heavens, and all the things which they do, they do not by their own power, but by the power of Christ dwelling in them.—And this "tabernacle" is faith in Christ, by which he dwells in us: as we have it, Ephes. iii. 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith:" concerning which Isaiah says, iv. 6, "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain:" that is, it is faith that defends both in adversity and prosperity.

*Ver. 5.—And he is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber: he rejoiced as a giant to run his course.*

*Ver. 6.—His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his course unto the other end of it: nor is there any one that is hidden from his heat.*

That is, he prepared the Gospel: or, that of which the apostles preach in the Gospel: for he describes in these two verses that sun, for which, he had said before, there was a tabernacle set in the apostles; and concerning which sun it is that the whole Gospel speaks and declares; and he is the glory of God, and in whom God hath placed all things.

It is the opinion of almost all, that these two verses speak of the incarnation, conversation, and assumption of Christ.—Let us, therefore, first speak a little of this opinion.

This "chamber" of Christ, (the Hebrew word for which signifies something secret or concealed,) all understand to be the Virgin Mary, from whose womb Christ proceeded, as the sun does from the east or from the secret darkness of the night. This is, indeed, a beautiful idea; in which is signified that ineffable na-

tivity, in the accomplishment of which the power of the Most High overshadowed the Virgin, and wrought in secret this offspring of our salvation: of which, nature knew nothing whatever, nor could she ever reach unto it. For as the sun in his rising comes forth visible to all, and yet no one knows from whence he comes; so Christ, when born, comes forth to the view of all, and yet has an ineffable nativity (as Isaiah said he should have); for, that he should be born of a virgin without man, is that which surpasses all human idea and comprehension.

And the prophet calls him "bridegroom," because, being clothed with humanity, he was united unto the church, in one flesh: which is a great and sweet sacrament: in which the rich and the poor are joined together, the righteous and the sinner, the blessed and the condemned, the son of grace and the son of misery. And indeed it is impossible that the great mercy of God could be described in a more wonderful way than by calling Christ the "bridegroom" of the church: in which union all the blessed things that are Christ's are freely shared by us, and all our miseries taken away by him.

But how does this bridegroom come forth out of his chamber? And why does the prophet set forth this Christ alone under this comparison? Perhaps it is because a bridegroom comes forth out of the chamber adorned and crowned, and rejoicing in the love of his bride. For it is in the same manner that Christ proceeded from the womb of the Virgin rejoicing in the love of his church, adorned and crowned by the Holy Spirit; for, as to the flesh, he came into the world in the greatest poverty and contempt, yet he came full of the ornaments and crowns of the grace of God, exulting in the love of his church. And therefore, he rejoiced as a giant to run his course: that is, he grew and wrought more and more in the love, power, and might of the Spirit; he fought in agonizing contest with the devil and with our sins, and suffered and died.

"His going forth is from the end of heaven" (or 'from the highest heaven.') This some will have to be

spoken of his eternal generation : because he came forth from the Father and came into the world : as we have it written, John xvi. And his course was unto the ends of it. This they explain as referring to his descending.— And next we have “ his heat,” which they understand as meaning his Spirit what filled the whole earth, glorifying Christ as Lord of all, and shewing that all things were put in subjection under his feet.

These things, as I have said, are true, but they are not spoken in their place here : for there are both order and consequence required to support them as applicable to this passage. The prophet seems to me to say nothing here concerning the incarnation and conversation of Christ, but to speak concerning his glorification and preaching only : for he is describing the “ heavens,” and that whole mystery of Pentecost, and the ministry of the Gospel. And therefore I do not imagine that he goes back at all to those things which took place before Pentecost, but rather continues speaking of those things which followed it : that is, that he speaks of the declarations of these “ heavens ” and the gift of tongues : that is, of the kingdom of faith which was spread throughout the whole world. And this both the order and the words themselves seem to make plain unto us, if we do but understand the prophet as speaking allegorically on account of the majesty of the sacred mystery. For as we understood the “ heavens,” the firmament, the days, and the nights, the sun, and the tabernacle of the sun, allegorically, as representing Christ mystically, and as preached by his apostles ; so in the same continued allegory we must understand the going forth of the bridegroom from his chamber, his performing his circuit, and rejoicing as a giant to run his course, as having reference to Christ reigning by the Gospel, and preached and believed in by it.—These are my meditations, but if any one has a better view and opinion of the passage let that stand : for this Psalm, as I have said, speaks of a certain new world.

While, therefore, the “ sound ” of these heavens goes unto the end of the earth, he who has set his

tabernacle in these same heavens, goes forth in and by this their ministry, and is revealed in the earthly hearts of men by faith: by which he betroths the church unto himself, collected from throughout the whole world: as Hosea saith, ii. 19, "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever: yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness." For Christ was not properly and fully made a bridegroom by his incarnation, but by his ascension, his church having been betrothed unto him in faith. For he that hath the bride is the bridegroom, as the Baptist saith, John iii. For it is consent that makes matrimony: before which, the person is called a suitor rather than a bridegroom. Wherefore, his coming forth is as a bridegroom: and his revelation as such unto the church is by faith: that is, when he is believed in he appears as the bridegroom.

But what we are to understand by this "chamber," or this 'secret place,' I do not clearly know, unless the prophet means by the expression, that Christ so arises in the hearts of the faithful, that it cannot be known whence he cometh: as John saith, chap. iii. "The wind (of the Spirit) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." Whereby is signified the free gratuitous visitation of the mercy of God. For faith in Christ does not arise in our hearts by the efforts of our thoughts, wisdom, or will, but, by the secret and incomprehensible work of the Holy Spirit; it is, by this operation preceding all works of ours, that we are endowed with faith in Christ (if ever we possess it) through the hearing of the Word only, without any works of our own whatever.

And, if I understand these things rightly, it is with the same figure of speech that this passage is given us, where it is said, Psalm cxxxv. "He bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures." And again, Psalm xvii. "Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasures." For if those things which pertain unto the sustaining of the flesh proceed out of the hidden treasures of God, and

cannot be previously procured, laboured for, or prepared by us; how much more shall those divine and eternal things which are given to us in and by faith, by the hearing and ministry of the Word, be bestowed upon us without any efforts of our own. Hence, David necessarily says that Christ proceeds forth and rises in our hearts, as a bridegroom cometh out of his secret place: that all the glory may be of God, and the works of his hands, and not of our own pride or free-will.

And it is an exceedingly beautiful figure, when this secret place of God is called the chamber of the bridegroom; because, the church herself is every where called in the scriptures *ALMUTH*; that is, 'hidden,' which is the chamber of Christ; out of which Christ (or whatever is of Christ, whether it be faith, or the Word, or strength,) comes forth and is made manifest to the world. For while these things are manifested in the church, Christ is manifested also: because, all things which the church hath are the bridegroom's. Hence, the Apostle saith, Ephes. iii. 10, 11, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." When, therefore, the prosperity of the church and faith proceed, then most certainly Christ proceeds or goes forth in the church, and through the church and the high places he comes forth into the world; as we have it, 1 Tim. iii. 16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Indeed I cannot conceive nor express the power and energy that are contained in the words of this verse; they are greater than I can attain unto.—Christ is here introduced by the prophet as coming forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber: wherein, he seems, by a brief expression, to make Christ and the church one flesh and one spirit, and having all things common and in a mutual participation. It is to this that the Song of

Solomon alludes where he describes the rising up and the going forth of the church, saying, Song vi. 10, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun?" In a word, it was a familiar and favourite custom with David to compare the rising of Christ and of the church to the rising of the morn and of the sun, as we have it, Psalm cx. 3, "From the womb of the morning is the dew of thy birth:" which is rendered thus in our translation, "From the womb before the morning have I begotten thee." And what is the womb of the morning, but the chamber of the church from which Christ goes or comes forth: that is, while he is preached by the apostles in the Gospel, the Christians are increased, in whom is Christ, and they in Christ. Thus, 2 Sam. xxiii. the last words of David contain the same expressions, "And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, even as a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain!"

Whether, therefore, we call it a "chamber," or the 'secret place' of God, or the womb of the church from which Christ (that is, his body the church) comes forth and grows, it matters not, for each are true: and from the nativity of the flesh of Christ, is easily understood this nativity of the Spirit of Christ (that is of his spiritual church).

"He rejoiced as a giant to run a race."—A giant is, in the Hebrew, GIBOR, which signifies 'powerful,' or 'ruler:' but in a spiritual sense, and in the sense in which the prophet means it, it signifies that the church and Christ in it, should, by the word of the apostles, go forth and proceed prosperously, and increase in the face and in defiance of all the powers of hell; though, according to the flesh, it should be weakened by many and various persecutions. For Christ is not diminished, but runs on with rejoicing, and is magnified and exalted throughout the whole world, even as the visible sun seems in some way to exult as he rises and ascends.

But however, the royal prophet seems here to speak in a peculiar and kingly tone: so that I confess I cannot



explain and set forth the power of his words by any expressions of mine, though I can in a measure embrace his meaning and the thing itself in my meditation. He is here describing in a very brief expression the conflict of the church, standing, in the all-powerful Word, and in all-glorying faith, against all the powers of the Word. In doing this he ascribes all things to Christ fighting in her, as a giant fighting with alacrity, conquering, and doing every thing prosperously : whereas, to sense, every thing appears just the contrary. For as he had set forth the great acts of the poor apostles under the magnificent allegories of the heavens, firmament, day, and night ; so now, in the same grandeur of words and allegory, he represents the power of Christ under the similitude of a giant, running and multiplying himself by the Gospel through instruments of the greatest weakness, and, (as to appearance,) by the diminution of the church which he increases. So that he appears to be not her bridegroom but her enemy, and not to go forth, but to perish. And hence it is that David says, that he goeth forth out of his chamber, or, out of his secret place : that is, by the sacrament of the cross and a crucified church.

“ His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the other end of it.”—The Hebrew has it, in more appropriate words, ‘ His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit unto the end of them.’ Wherein with a wonderful propriety he represents the whole church multiplied throughout the whole world. For he calls those the ends of heaven, which we call the horizons ; wherein he pursues his begun allegory of the visible sun. For as in every part of the world the same sun’s course is from the east unto the west, as if from one end of the world to the other (for so it appears to our senses) ; so Christ arises every where in the world, and his church is gathered together from the east unto the west : as he saith, Matt. viii. 11, “ Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” And Isaiah xlix. 12, “ Behold, these shall

come from far : and, lo, these from the north and from the west ; and these from the land of Sinim." And again xliii. 6, 7, " I will say to the north, Give up ; and to the south, Keep not back : bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth ; even every one that is called by my name : for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him ; yea, I have made him."

These things are, in the 2d Psalm, expressed thus, " I will give unto thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Wherefore, ' from the one end of the heavens, to the other end of them,' is used in this verse in the same figure of speech as that in which Christ says, Matt. xxiv. 31, " And they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven (that is, from the east) to the other," (that is, to the west). For it is thus that Christ is gathered together from out of the men of the earth from the east even unto the west, wherever he is preached, wherever he is believed on, wherever he is made the bridegroom of the church ; which is accomplished only by the ministry of the Word ; and that also, where the ministers themselves see nothing of it before hand, nor use any compulsive means. Thus also the apostles heard that the Samaritans had received the Word of God before they had determined to preach unto them. And, Isaiah xlix. 21, the church wonders that the Lord wrought before all her thoughts, and that a multitude of believers rose up quite unexpectedly, saying, " Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive and roving to and fro ? and who hath brought up these ? Behold, I was left alone ; and these, where were they ?" For thus did the good savour of Christ in the apostles draw men together from the whole circuit of the earth unto the Word and faith of Christ : that is, from the one end of the heavens even unto the other end.

" Nor can any one hide himself from his heat."— That the Holy Spirit is often represented under the figure of the heat of the sun, there remains not a doubt.

And this Holy Spirit had not respect of persons, nor did he make any distinction between the gentiles and the Jews, seeing that, he is the same Lord of all, and who even of these stones raises up children unto Abraham. For as all have sinned, so all are quickened and justified by the same freely-given and mercy-shewing Spirit. And David chose to call it ‘heat,’ rather than by any other figurative word, that he might thereby set forth the power of the life-giving and quickening Spirit. For “heat” is a quality of life, and cold, of death: thus we have it, Gen. i. 2, “And the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters:” that is, brooded over them and cherished them, being about to give life to them by his heat, just as a hen sets on and gives life to her eggs.

In the Hebrew it is not “Nor can any one hide himself;” which seems to imply a fleeing in the person thus endeavouring to hide himself, as Adam attempted to hide himself in paradise: but it is simply, ‘And there is none hidden from his heat:’ by which is rather implied, that the person hidden is found in a way of mercy, and illuminated, or, having a revelation made unto him: so Luke ii. Christ is said to be preached “for a light unto the gentiles.” And this expression of David is to set forth that which he says,—that Christ reigns every where throughout the whole world, and that there is no place where his Spirit does not justify and quicken men. And this is thus set forth, that the ungodly might not assign any particular place to the church of Christ, nor confine it to their own corner; for such imagine that they only are quickened by the Spirit; whereas they are rather death-struck by the cold of Babylon.

And the prophet wishes to say this also,—that the giving and pouring out of the Holy Spirit throughout the whole world is done only where the Word of the Gospel rises. For the law neither gives “heat,” nor indeed possesses it to give, but is rather filled with chilling cold, making men unwilling and slow, nay, dead, to all good works: as it is said, Psalm cxlvii. 17, “And who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word and

melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow and the waters flow." That is, I say, he sendeth out the Word of his Gospel heat: that is, his Spirit: for it is this that melts: as we have it, Psalm cxxvi. 4, "Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams of the south."

*Ver. 7.—The law of the Lord is undefiled, converting souls: the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to the simple.*

Having described the ministry of the Gospel and its work, which is, to declare the glory of God, and with the same Word to set forth the faith of Christ, and to communicate the Spirit; the prophet now goes on to describe the fruits of that ministry: which is, the love of the law, or, the fulfilling of the law: as Paul saith, Rom. xiii. 10, "For love is the fulfilling of the law." For the law is not fulfilled by works, but by love: nor does it require to be feignedly fulfilled by works, but to be loved with affection. And therefore, the prophet having his mind on those, who, having received the Spirit by the Word, are joyful and filled with love, instructs them to the observance of those things which are of the law, shewing them how just, and holy, and good the law of God is, which, to those who are without the Spirit, is bitter, unjust, and hard: whereas, the fault is not in the law, but in the affections of the man. Hence, David is as if he were here comparing Christ with Moses, saying, They hated Moses, and fled from the rays on his face, and at length stoned him, and always murmured against him. For in these things was prefigured the mutual hatred between the law and an evil mind and affections. Whereas, in truth, Moses was the meekest of all men that lived upon the face of the earth; but this they knew not. And so also the law of God is most amiable: but this the depravity of the heart understandeth and knoweth not: until the depravity be subdued by the voice of the bridegroom and the Spirit is given: then the law is known and loved.

Wherefore, although David is here speaking of the law of the Lord, which is the letter, yet he speaks of it

in no other way than as being loved, and being now sweetly changed from the letter into the Spirit. Thus it is promised, Jeremiah xxxi. 33, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." And this is what David intimates, where he says, that the law is "undefiled:" that is perfect, or innocent and pure: that is, as the Hebrew expression has it, *THEMIMA*, 'that which makes good or innocent.' But this the law does not, unless it be written with the finger of the Spirit and taught by the "heat" of the Word: and therefore, it was that David spoke of the "heat" in the verse preceding.

I have abundantly observed before, that the law is the letter only, whether it be written, or whether it be spoken, or whether it be understood, until it be loved: and this is not in the power of the law itself that teacheth, but of the "heat" that converts and justifies souls. In a word, by these expressions David has given these excellent qualities to the law,—that it is undefiled, that it converts souls, &c. that he might thereby distinguish it from the law which is taught without the Word of faith and without the "heat" of the Spirit, which can only pollute and divert souls, and make men unbelievers and fools. So that all the things which the prophet in this place speaks concerning the law, must be understood as being brought by the Holy Spirit, the communicator of "heat" through the Word of faith. And this is the reason why he uses such a full variety of words, repeating the law several (even *six*) times, under different appellative expressions, and with twelve epithets, as if he were setting it forth with the twelve fruits of the tree of life: evincing, by this full display of words, that which is truly felt in the soul that loves and glories in the law. For he that loveth the law cannot praise it enough, so pleased is he with that which displeased him before. Hence, we are to receive all these things as spoken by way of contrast: in order that we might understand, what the law works in us without the Spirit, and what the Spirit works in us without the law.

First: 'The law is undefiled by faith;' not only in

itself, or objectively (as we say), but also in us, or effectively (as we say): for formally (as we speak) it is ever "undefiled," because it makes us good and undefiled, and is loved by us as undefiled when we are made, by faith, undefiled and good: that is, we then truly know what it is. But, without faith, it not only does not make us undefiled and good, and not only is not loved by us, but it makes us evil and guilty, and is hated as being itself evil. Because, the law worketh wrath and death, which every man hates; and it also prohibits concupiscence, by which every man is irritated and wrought up to indignation; though from the fear of punishment, he pretends obedience; which hypocrisy is touched and laid open by that very law which it pretends to obey.

Secondly: 'The law converts the soul.' The law, as I said, before the receiving of the Spirit converts the hand only through the fear of punishment, but, as to the heart, it rather diverts that with hatred, and with indignation at the concupiscence which is prohibited. And also (before the receiving of the Spirit) converts the mouth, and the eyes, and ears, and all the internal actions, but the heart in such is not *right*, and the spirit in them is not faithful and believing.—Wherefore, let no one imagine that in these verses the law is praised absolutely as considered alone: the person that reads must understand at the same time, that the law is made what it is here said to be, by faith, and that it is not so in itself, and does not make men so of itself. The law does not do such things, but is made such by the "heat" of the sun, through faith in the rising Word. It becomes, I say, good in us; whereas, before faith, it was quite the contrary. From these things therefore we understand, that the fruit of evangelical faith is, that by it the law is made amiable, and such as David here describes it to be.

Thirdly: 'The testimony of the Lord is faithful.' By the testimony of the Lord here we must doubtlessly understand this law of which David was speaking in the last clause; as the same law is also understood in the four following names or appellations,—righteousnesses (or

statutes), precepts (or commandment), fear, and judgments, only in different ways and senses. For the "law" is so called from its teaching those things which we know not. And "testimony" is so called, because it is a testifying; which is a sign or memorial conveyed by others as witnesses or messengers from him who is absent and appears not. And of the rest we will speak in their place. Before we proceed farther, therefore, let us look farther into these two observations.

The law by teaching makes THAMIM; that is, good men; and converts souls; if, that is to say, it be taught in the Spirit. And the testimony is called "faithful," because, although it be the word of a person absent and not appearing, yet it never misleads or deceives; for this testimony is not delivered in vain, nor is our work of delivering it forgotten before him who appears not: and thus faith believes that the testimony of God is faithful. But the person not being present often causes men to be suspicious about his faithfulness, and slow of heart to believe: for men deal in these matters with an unopen and fickle faith.—Nor is this "testimony" faithful only *passively*, but it makes us faithful *actively*: so that those who have faith are by it made to be as ready to believe the person whose testimony they hear in his absence, as if he were present. On the other hand, where the Spirit of faith is not, there the testimony is neither accounted faithful, nor does it make such men faithful; nay, it makes them unfaithful. For they act as if there were no person at all that gave the precept, or, that he will call us to no account, nor render to us according to our works, and thus, the testimony to such is rendered vain and false, because they themselves are vain and false.

Fourthly: 'It giveth wisdom unto the simple.' These little ones are simple ones in the real sense of the Word; and they are such as are easily persuadable by the Word; as we have it, Prov. i. 22, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?" And again, 14, 15, "The simple believeth every word." And this beautifully agrees with this testimony. For none hear this testimony of the

Lord but those who are persuadable and teachable like little children, while the testimony is declared by vile and mean witnesses, who have received it from him who is far removed out of the comprehension of all sense. And such are made "wise" by this testimony: that is, they are made to know those things which exceed all human capacity, and are far removed from us: that is, which are of faith, which when they know, they withdraw from all those things which are seen and known by all men, and study to please him only, whom they see not. Thus this testimony, while it teaches heavenly things, becomes to the man, by faith, the testimony of God, being wise itself and making men wise. On the contrary, those great ones, being impersuadable, cleave only to present things, and being blinded by these they are made unwise, and have no knowledge whatever of an absent God; and if from the fear of punishment they are compelled to speak, hear, and think of an absent God, yet, in the affections of their mind, they are wandering far away from him, and are wholly swallowed up in those things which they see. And this is always the case, where faith and the Holy Spirit have not yet made to such the testimony of God what it really is, when it gives wisdom unto the simple: that is, where it is taught without the Spirit. In the Hebrew, the expression may be understood collectively EDUTH EDONAI: that is, the sum of the testimonies, or whatever there are of the testimonies of the Lord: even as ALMUTH signifies youth: that is, youth collectively, or whatever we call youth. But however, this is but little to our purpose: excepting that it is well to observe the beauty of our royal prophet's expressions.

Ver. 8.—*The righteousnesses (or statutes) of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes.*

Fifthly, therefore, David commends the right righteousnesses of the Lord, which are wrought by the Gospel of grace: (which our translator in other places renders 'justifications:': but here the Hebrew is not ZIDEKOTH



but PIKUDIM, which is rendered ‘statutes’ and ‘mandates’ also.)

Seventhly: he saith that these righteousneses rejoice the “heart;” (for they are contrary to the flesh.) Because the letter of the law killeth and distresseth the heart, for those who are under it cannot feel that any satisfaction is given to the requirements of the law, by all their powers; nay, the more they devote themselves and labour, the more they find the demands upon them from the law increase. Or if they do not labour under the law in this way, they rejoice in a vain and perverted confidence in their own works: because their delight is centred, not in God, nor in a pure conscience, nor in the law of the Lord, but in themselves: which is not a rejoicing of heart, but of the flesh and of the natural senses; while there remains all the time an uneasy conscience within, that will in its time break out. Thus then the testimonies of the Lord give self-wisdom unto these proud ones, who stick to the letter, and who are thus wise unto themselves. Hence, the law, while it remains in the letter only, works these two different effects in these two different characters:—it either feignedly converts, or the more and more diverts or turns away from God: and so, it either gives men up to their own wisdom, or makes them greater and greater fools in their own eyes: and so again, it either falsely and feignedly rejoices the heart, or makes it the more and more distressed. Therefore, the Holy Spirit has here set forth three qualities of the law: where it not only says that it ‘converts,’ but says that it converts “souls;” and not contented with having said that it giveth wisdom, he adds “unto the simple;” and again, not satisfied with saying it rejoiceth, adds, the “heart.”—And now let us pursue what farther remains. For the Holy Spirit here indicates a threefold kind of men; the one ignorant, the other self-wise and hating the law, and the other wise and loving the law.

Ignorance of the law makes men feignedly converted: for it converts them, but does not convert their souls. A hatred of the law makes men hate it and more estranged from God, and that from their hearts. And

how? because those who presume to fulfil it by their own powers, have not yet known how spiritual the law is: and therefore, they set up their own righteousness, thinking, in their blindness, that they have fulfilled the law, and that they are good and converted, and become undefiled: whereas, by this their impiety they are twofold more defiled than they were before, and twice as perverted; and the law is twofold more defiled to them, and turns away their hearts twofold more than before, through this their foolish and deceptive opinion of innocence and conversion. For in the first place, they are in reality guilty and averse from God: and, in the next place, by this their appearance of works, they cover over their guilt and aversion, and proudly and deludedly boast in vanity and a lie.

And so also the testimony of the Lord, when men are ignorant of it, makes them feignedly wise: for it makes the proud self-wise: and when it is hated it makes such men more and more ignorant. But how? For while such presume to give full satisfaction to its demands by their works, not knowing what things of nought their works are, they seem to themselves to be wise and to understand all things, and imagine that they are made true and faithful; whereas by this their hypocrisy all these their imagined perfections are twofold the greater sins. But where men know how unwise and unfaithful and vain they are, and that they possess and can do nothing that can satisfy the law, they hate the testimonies of the Lord, and like not to be bound by them. By which will of theirs they become more and more unwise, and are more and more drawn to those things which require worldly wisdom; for they would that these invisible things did not exist at all; so far are they from being wise in them. And thus to neither of them is the testimony of the Lord faithful, and neither of them does it make wise; though it is in different ways. For the former characters do not understand how faithful the testimony of the Lord is, they themselves being most vain; and such are not made wise by it. But the latter see indeed that the law is faithful, and that they

themselves are vain, and yet they are not yet instructed by it so as to be made wise: but when by the Spirit they come to love it, then they find it faithful and instructing them unto wisdom.

So, again, an ignorance of the righteousneses, or statutes of God, make men feignedly or falsely joyful: for they make them joyful, but do not make their 'hearts' joyful. They puff up the proud with a rejoicing in their own works, so that they seem to themselves to be right and happy; whereas, in truth, as Solomon says, they know not what evil they do; and within they have a conscience the most confused, and of all the farthest from being right. But those who know that they are not right, and are involved in various anxieties about the requirements of the law,—such indeed hate the law and are distressed with many troubles, and are always sorrowful before the Lord in all their ways: as we have it, Malachi iii. 14, "We have walked mournfully before the Lord." Thus in neither of these characters are the righteousneses of the Lord right, nor do they rejoice the heart.

Seventhly: 'The commandment of the Lord is clear.' Translators seem to me to have rendered this "clear," which is, in the Hebrew, 'clean' or 'elect:' and it is the same word that we have, Psalm xviii. "With the elect thou wilt shew thyself elect." But perhaps they were led to translate it 'clear' from that which follows, "enlightening the eyes."

It is called 'precept' or 'commandment' from this,—because it exacts and prohibits; and therefore, it comprehends that part of the law which is most annoying to and hated of men. For, to be taught, and ordered aright, and directed, (which we have said are the offices of the law and the testimony and the statutes,) are gentler things, and human pride will more willingly bear them: but it hates and despises a rigid precept which exacts and severely demands; nor will it obey it but against its will, and with murmuring and complaining. But by those other characters who understand it not, that is, the first character of men whom we have called hypo-

crites, the law is considered as elect and pleasurable, while they imagine that they fully satisfy it by their works. But when the Spirit enters who fills us with the love of the law, it is not only not hated and despised, but considered among the most precious and excellent of things. To such, the commandment of God becomes elect indeed; so much so, that they would not exchange it for any thing that the world possesses: and indeed if the law were not given, they would heartily wish it to be given.

Eighthly: "It enlightens the eyes." But, in truth, it darkens and blinds ignorant hypocrites, who are proud of their vain show of works, believing all the while that they are most enlightened, and that they see and understand every thing. Thus, the commandment "enlightens" them, but does not enlighten their "eyes."—And others it blinds altogether; who, from their hatred of the commandment, are led to those lengths that they consider nothing more vile and abject than it: and they prefer unto it their own lusts, and choose them in their heart in preference; how much soever they may be compelled from fear to pretend that it is otherwise. And what blindness is greater than to put in the place of the elect commandment of God, (which is the most precious and elect of all things) those very lusts which that commandment prohibits?—Whereas, those who love the commandment, hold their lusts as the most vile of all things, and consider nothing more elect and precious than the commandment of God, which not only shews and witnesses against such vile desires, but also utterly prohibits them, and commands them not to be. And such rejoice that these their lusts are thus rigorously prohibited, and that contrary things are most imperatively demanded. Thus the all-elect and precious commandment of the Lord accords with all their wishes: for these have their "eyes" enlightened to see clearly the things that are truly lovely and truly hateful.

But before we pursue the following part of the Psalm, that we may not remain any longer in doubt about these matters, let us inquire, in what way it is

that it comes to pass, that the law should be undefiled unto us, that the testimony of the Lord should be faithful, that his statutes should be right, that his commandment should be elect, his fear clean, and his judgments true, and that all those effects should be produced by them which have been mentioned, and will be mentioned hereafter?—I answer: We never attain unto these things by working and labouring: because, the law is not, and never can be, fulfilled by working and labouring, but by despairing in ourselves and of all our works and labours. For the law cannot delight us before it is fulfilled, but it must be afterwards. Wherever, therefore, these fools of workmen attempt by their own works to fulfil the law, and never despair of themselves, they must of necessity be worn out, and must labour in vain: for until they find in themselves that wherewith they may satisfy the demands of the exacting law, they cannot possibly cease to toil, and by this, to become disquieted and to hate the law. And thus, the law exhausts them and will wear them out until it consume them for ever!

But they who feel their own impotency, who confess that they cannot satisfy the exactions of the law, and who despair in themselves and flee unto Christ, the only fulfiller of the law, and hear him and believe in him as the end of the law for righteousness,—they who truly do this, have the Holy Spirit given unto them freely, without any works of their own, and without the law at all, in the midst of this their humility, and through this their faith: which Holy Spirit does not enflame our hearts with the new and sweet desires of love, and cause us to hate the whole desires of the flesh, for our works, but of his own free gift. And when this is done, the will being now changed into another will, the man beholds the law of the Lord, and sees it to prohibit and command those same things which he, being now inflamed by the Spirit, desires and loves. Hence it comes to pass, that he cannot but love that law which answers to his own wishes in all things; nor can he help praising it, and singing those things which are contained in these verses.

Now such a man sees that the whole fault was, not

in the law, but in his will, that the law increased sin and worked wrath in him : seeing that the law itself is undefiled, converting souls, making wise, rejoicing the heart, and enlightening the eyes. For if the law from its real nature only increased sin and wrought wrath, love, which is the sister of the law, must do the same, for that agrees in all things with the law. And this, indeed, it does where it is not seated in the will, even as the law does the same also when not seated in the will by the Spirit, and not accompanied by love. For what did the love of Christ work in the Jews but greater wrath and sin? And the same wrath and sin does the law work in all men, as long as it is without their will. And it is not in any man's will, nor is any man's will in it, until it is loved, and until that is loved which the law commands.

*Ver. 9.—The fear of the Lord is holy, and endureth for ever : the judgments of the Lord are true and justified in themselves.*

The Hebrew has it 'The fear of the Lord is pure, or clean.' Nor is this expression used merely by way of epithet (as it is generally imagined) to distinguish it from servile fear : at least this is my opinion. But the fear of the Lord is here used to signify simply the fear of God : which David here sets it forth by an adjective that denotes its praise, and shews, that this fear becomes pure in the hearts, through the Gospel, by the "heat" of the Word : which fear is impure in all others where the Word and Gospel operate not : that is, it is accounted impure.—This we shall more easily understand, if we consider David as speaking, in this verse, of fear and purity objectively : (as we have mentioned concerning all the things preceding.) For thus also the law of the Lord, simply understood, is undefiled : but it is so only unto those who are undefiled : for to the guilty it is hurtful and odious. Thus, the testimony of the Lord is faithful to the godly, but unfaithful to the ungodly. And so also, the commandment is elect unto the elect, but reprobate and vile unto the reprobate. And so again here, the fear of the Lord being pure, is not to be referred to

the fear itself, but to the affection of mind in those by whom it is considered and held to be pure. For such as each one is in his mind and affection, such is the law unto him, and the things of the law.

Ninthly; therefore, 'the fear of the Lord is pure.' And here again hypocrites will pretend that they fear God, and that they are pure in the fear of the Lord; whereas, by that very pretence they are twofold more impure than before, and, in their heart, they all the while, in reality, despise God. But those others who are not ignorant of their impurity, and who feel that they do not fear God, would rather that there were no fear of God at all, and choose rather the impurity of their heart which thus despises and sees not God. But those who by the Spirit are brought to love the fear of God, and have their eyes enlightened, and know God, they see how pure a thing the fear of the Lord is; and how he does all things acceptably who fears God, and turns away from sin, and delights in purity; because his will and mind are according to that which the fear of the Lord requires, being made agreeable and obedient unto it in all things.

Tenthly: 'It endures for ever.' For as the law, being fulfilled by love, endureth and is confirmed for ever, so also the fear of the Lord, being anointed with love, is eternal. And as the law, when not loved nor fulfilled, is temporally kept only, and then given over to oblivion; so the fear of God also, if it be not accompanied by love, is never firm nor true. Thus, this fear in the hypocrites already mentioned is feigned for a time only, for it only continues for an hour in external appearance. And in those that hate the law, this fear is never found at all, because, they never admit it into their hearts, nor love it: and thus, under their fear of God, they hate him more and more; and so become more and more impure. For he that fears not willingly is a twofold despiser. But those who are brought to love the fear of the Lord, as they fear him willingly, they fear that which the law commands firmly and for

ever, and they accord with the law, in their hearts, in all things.

Eleventhly: 'The judgments of the Lord are true.' By these judgments we may understand, nay, we ought to understand, both the law itself, and also that which it works in us. Thus, the law of God is called the judgment of God from its office, because it arraigns and condemns the flesh, or, judges the old man, and all those things which pertain unto the mortifying of the flesh. And hence, they are rightly called judgments, and universal adversities, which destroy the old man, that the law may in due time be satisfied by faith. For, as the law, unless it teach us and be understood, ought not to be called a law unto us; and as the testimony of the Lord, if it be not known and felt, is not a testimony unto us; (for where the mind of the man is not moved by the word of the law, it is as if a fable were told to one who is deaf; as is the real case with all insensible hypocrites that despise the word of the law;) so also, the judgments of the Lord, if they be not felt in their proper effects, in the mortification of the flesh, are not to be called judgments unto us.

Hypocrites, therefore, who are ignorant of the judgments of God, and yet pretend to all things, are twofold vain: because they will not in heart and truth be judged and humbled, and yet they boast themselves as being of all the most vile and humble, and as knowing the true judgments of God. And as to those who hate the judgments of God, although they do not deny that they are true, yet they are not true unto them, because they are not made true by them: that is, they are unwilling to be judged by them, or mortified by them, and they would rather that they did not exist at all. But by those who love them, the judgments of God they are fully understood to be true; as they really are: and such sing unto the Lord that of Daniel, 'All the things that thou hast done unto us, O Lord, thou hast done in true judgment.' For the Lord does not grieve or wound any one uselessly or in vain: for there is always that in



our flesh which is worthy of judgment and of death ; namely, sin.

Twelfthly : ‘ They are righteous in themselves, (or altogether).’ For the Hebrew word here is absolute, ZADEKU ; that is, ‘ are righteous.’ And “ in themselves ” is the same expression as we have, Psalm iv. 8, “ In peace altogether,” or ‘ in that thing,’ (*In pace in id ipsum* : ) which is an expression of a collective and aggregative signification. So that “ in themselves ” is of the same signification as ‘ altogether,’ or all in one. So that, the meaning is, ‘ all the judgments of the Lord are righteous,’ which is so said because the judgments of God, as they are true, always find something in the flesh which they may judge, and therefore they judge it justly : and therefore they justify all those who love them, and who acknowledge that they are righteous, or just. But unto those who hate them they are unjust and unrighteous, because they will not be judged or justified by them. And unto hypocrites all these things are feigned : for these judgments justify them, in appearance, but not in all things : for they will only be judged and justified by those things which they themselves choose.

And observe this :—that David says “ judgments,” in the plural number, and adds “ all,” or altogether. The love, therefore, here must be great, which loves the judgments of the Lord, which are many and various, while the sufferings of Christ abound in us. But, it is a difficult thing to ascribe righteousness unto all the judgments of God : for here, the perseverance of love is set forth. There are indeed very many who will endure and justify one or the other judgment of God, without murmuring, and many who will endure many and various judgments, but there are few who will justify them all : for they are often increased, as it were, without end, and accumulated daily : there are few, therefore, who will endure all these things with joy and praise. For these are they that glory in tribulation, and count it all joy when they fall into divers temptations : and this he now shews in the following verse.

Ver. 10.—*Desirable are they above gold, and much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

This verse proves what I said before, that this Psalm speaks of the law of the Lord as made lovely by the Gospel, or, as it is in the eyes of those who work not but believe. For as the law to him that loveth is desirable above all treasures, and sweet above all pleasures, (which is what David means to say by the quantity of gold, or the honeycomb;) so also it is undefiled, faithful, right, elect, pure, true, converting souls, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, enduring for ever, and righteous in all things. Whereas, before the hearing of the Gospel and faith, all these things are quite the contrary to him that hates the law. It requires, therefore, a miraculous power of the Spirit and an exercise of the right hand of the Most High, to make all these things please, which just before most bitterly displeased. For what do men more eagerly pursue and seek after than riches and pleasures? And yet, the love of the Spirit in the law of the Lord is greater than the love of the flesh can be in riches and pleasures.

In a word, that the power of the Spirit might be set forth the more eminently in this miraculous change, David makes use of this forcible language in commending the praise of the law of the Lord. For, in the first place, the law is most gentle in teaching, though the flesh cannot with any patience endure it, because it cannot in any way suffer any thing to be said that opposes it. But it is harsher when it is testified of by the testimony of the Lord, and shews what will become of those who do not obey it, and requires faith. And then, it grows harsher in the precept, which severely urges and exacts. After this, it terrifies and strikes with fear, and at length, it becomes most grievous, bringing the flesh, by its judgments, down to death and damnation. In all these things, the flesh is most impatient; and as it hates the law in all its former operations, so in this last it detests it utterly and abhors it. And yet, when

the Spirit comes in, he not only makes all these things tolerable, but lovely, desirable, and sweet above all those things that can be desired by and that can delight the flesh.

From all these things it is, I think, quite manifest to all, how eminent a prophet David is, how appropriate a manner of expression he always uses, and how applicable all his tropes and figures, and also, his words and sentences are: for he expresses himself in words the most plain, and yet the most deep and comprehensive: so much so, that no interpreter can come up to him in any form of explanation.

Here, therefore, we have the fruit of the evangelical preaching,—namely, the love of righteousness and the hatred of iniquity: that is, the fulfilment of all laws. Which things, as they cannot be attained unto by any powers, works, laws, or devotions of men, it remains, that we must despair of all things else and attain unto them by faith in Christ only.

Ver. 11.—*For thy servant keepeth them, and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

The Hebrew has, instead of “keepeth them,” ‘is provident, or cautious, or instructed in them:’ which Hieronymus renders ‘shall teach them:’ but our translator is nearer, who says “keepeth them.”—Nor is it in vain that David here admonishes us that we should be cautious observers of the law: for he does this on account of the subtlety of the serpent, who easily seduces the incautious. And Paul has this fear of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi.; for, as to the wisdom of the flesh, how wicked it is, how evil an eye it has, with what subtle devotedness it seeks its own, and with what an holy external appearance it adorns itself, cannot be imagined by any apprehension. Concerning which Taulerus beautifully discourses in his sermons, where he so often speaks of human nature as being most crafty in its affections; all which are resisted by the judgments and law of God until the body of sin be killed and destroyed, and until this mortal be swallowed up in immortality. In the

mean time, as far as we serve God in the Spirit, we delight in the law of the Lord: and yet, the body which is thus being destroyed, weighs down the soul, so that, with our flesh we serve the law of sin. And this is the reason why we ought to be cautious and careful observers of the judgments of God, by which our service of sin is destroyed.

And although this be grievous and laborious, yet, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby, as the Apostle teaches, Heb. xii. and as David also teaches in this place, when he says, "And in keeping of them there is great reward." So the Lord saith by Jeremiah xi. 'There shall be a reward according to our works.' All which things are said for the consolation of those that labour, but not to strengthen and establish a servile and mercenary desire after rewards, as due to our merits: which desire reigns in, and actuates, all those, who, by their various kinds of works make God a certain sort of merchant, whereas they all the while refuse to labour in the judgments of God. Hence Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 58, saying, "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." For it behoves the servants of the Lord to know that they please God in their labour, that they fail not nor despair in their spirit, while he wills that they be willing and joyfully free workers in his law, pleasing God: and where this is the case, it inevitably follows, even though they seek it not, that there shall be "great reward," for God cannot deny himself, who said unto Abraham, Gen. xv. 'I am thy exceeding great reward.'

Ver. 12.—*Who can understand his errors? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.*

"My" is not in the Hebrew. And these "faults" are 'errors,' as Hieronymus translates the word, or, 'ignorances.' Thus all interpret the title of the 7th Psalm the 'ignorance of David.' By which is signified those sins, which, through the secret sin of presumption and pride, we account and consider to be good works. That is to say, such is the iniquity of the flesh that it

often deceives us in the very midst of tribulation and humiliation, and leads us to be proud and self-pleased with our very humility, and to be puffed up with our very despising of ourselves, with our very confession of sin, and with our very self-accusation of pride. And hence, the judgments of God cannot but be true and righteous continually, and for ever, even though we be perpetually judged by them, and though by them every thing that we do and say be condemned.

But it may be asked how can these faults be found in a servant of God, and whence do they arise, when he keeps the judgments of the Lord, and to whom the law is made innocent, faithful, right, elect, and in all respects amiable? Is not love the fulfilling of the law? Does not the servant of the Lord keep the judgments of God? if not, he lies in saying that he does keep them.—The Apostle answers all these things, Rom. viii. “The body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Hence, therefore, in this also the Spirit by the prophet teaches, the faithful in Christ are both sinners and saints, and that they delight in and serve the law of God in their mind, and the law of sin in their flesh. For, as far as they believe, so far are they righteous, and as far as they are under the dominion of the flesh, so far are they sinners: for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

But by flesh, as I have here observed, we are not to understand our grosser part, but that most secret and most subtle affection of the flesh: that is, the head of the old serpent, against which no one can be sufficiently guarded. And this it is that makes it impossible for any one to understand his errors, and is the reason why ‘in many things we offend all,’ and are polluted in our inward parts, so that ‘there is not a righteous man upon earth who doeth good and sinneth not.’ It is a certainty, therefore, that as long as we remain in the flesh, no one of us can understand his errors. And hence it becomes us, like Job ix. ‘to be afraid of all our works,’ and, to know, that in the sight of God no flesh living shall be justified.

Wherefore, let him that would go aright here, despair of himself and of all that he can do, and let him have recourse to this one remedy,—let him flee unto the throne of mercy, and pray to be cleansed from his secret faults. By this humility and faith only can he be saved: for the heart of man is depraved and unsearchable: and, “who can say that he hath made his heart clean?” Augustine here most truly saith, ‘Sin so blinds the eyes, that you cannot see what it is that blinds them: nay, this is the least of the matter you can see. Even as it is often found to be the case with respect to the carnal eyes.’ Hence David did not say Who hath faults? because all have faults, but all do not understand them: nay, no one understands them.

As, therefore, these words of the prophet are of universal application, ascribing to all men faults which they do not understand, how is it that the wise ones of our day, blinded by an invincible ignorance, (which is as a bar always in their way,) talk about the *first motion*, and of *doing what lies in their power*, and a heap of other trifling trash? whereby they make men secure and imaginarily pure, and thus render them careless and unconcerned in observing and keeping the judgments of God; dreaming that they can sometimes live without sin, at least without such sin as would need pardon.

The prophet was certainly free from mortal sin, (as these wise ones are continually talking,) and declares himself that he was, when he says these things of himself; nay, and he was free from venial sin, when he spoke these things in the fervour of the Spirit: for he would not have prayed thus unto God, if he had not felt the Spirit’s fervour. And yet he in all this state of spirit declares that no one can know his errors, yea, even such errors as would prevent his salvation if God did not cleanse him from them: for if all these sins of which he is speaking were venial, he would not have prayed so fervently to be cleansed from them. Whereas those wise sophists of our day account such sins so trifling, that they say they can be done away by I know not what trumpery means.—Paul also says, like David,

in his epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Epist. iv. 'That he was not conscious to himself of any evil, but that, nevertheless, he was not thereby justified.' And James saith, "In many things we offend all." But all these declarations and proofs of humility and truth these proud hypocrites extinguish by their impious cogitations; whereby they have vamped up a certain sort of I know not what good works and merits; and have made their distinctions between mortal and venial sins; concerning which David is now about to speak farther.

Ver. 13.—*From strange sins also spare thy servant, if they have not gotten dominion over me: then shall I be undefiled, and I shall be clean from the great transgression.*

The Hebrew is thus,—'Also from the proud keep back thy servant; let them not rule over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be cleansed from much iniquity.' Interpreters seem in the Hebrew to have read the letter *Raish* for *Daleth*, and so MISERIM for MISEDIM: that is, 'strange' for 'proud.' And that which our translator has rendered "spare" is, in the Hebrew, 'that guard by which any one is kept back from doing or suffering any thing:' as we have it Gen. xx. 6, "For I also guarded thee from sinning against me;" that is, 'I kept thee back.' The force of which word shews that this is that great peril and most dangerous contest in which the wolves, that is, rapacious hypocrites, in sheep's clothing, seek to devour simple souls, and to draw them away from the godliness of faith, by which alone the law is fulfilled and loved, into a superstitious godliness and works, by which the law is more offended than fulfilled. So great a thing is it to persevere in the godliness of faith, that the Holy Spirit cannot sufficiently admonish us against, and impress upon us the necessity of guarding against, these soft-worded doctrines of proud hypocrites.

And with what firmness does David declare them to be proud? For, in truth, where faith is not, there pride of works prevails without end, but with such secret and

spiritual craft, that the persons themselves who are under it know it not; for it carries with it a more specious show of every thing that is humble and godly, than even the faithful themselves carry with them. So that, no one can be safe but he whom the Lord spares and keeps back from being carried away by their shining examples and soft words, as David here prays, and is taught to pray. These hypocrites are they of whom it is said, Rom. xvi. 18, "And by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

David says therefore, "Keep back thy servant," that these proud ones carry me not away and deceive me: for, if I shall be kept back by thee, so that they prevail not against me, even with all their specious and pompous show of words and works, then shall I be upright, innocent, perfect, and simple. Whereby he intimates the contrary,—that he should be wicked and ungodly, if he were not kept back, and if they should prevail against him: for having lost faith *he* would immediately trust in works, and would howl with the wolves, who before was a simple sheep of Christ.

I have before observed, that our translator is accustomed to render the expression *THAM* 'undefiled:' which the Apostle, Rom. xvi. renders 'innocent or simple:' which in his Greek is *ακακος*. The words of the Apostle clearly illustrate these expressions of David, where he says, "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own bellies, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." This passage of Paul indeed illustrates numberless places of the prophets and of the Psalms, and inveighs with wonderful energy, emphasis, and power of words, against all traditions of men: and therefore it ought to be held by the most present and tenacious memory in the breasts of all Christians.

"And I shall be cleansed from the great transgression." This great transgression is supposed by many to be pride; and it is not badly so understood; but yet it



is rather obscure and improper: because ungodliness is pride. But the prophet here means that the ungodly consider themselves clean from those smaller sins while they do not kill, or steal, or commit adultery; just as that pharisee described in the Gospel boasted; and yet Christ, Matt. v. calls these the lesser commandments. But as to that great and weighty sin, by which all the things of the ungodly are polluted, even their good-works, they are so far from being cleansed from that, that by it they and all their works are the more and more polluted. Thus is that ungodliness and unbelief. And therefore, we must understand the prophet as speaking comparatively, and having before his mind the two different cleansings of the two different sinners who look upon the judgments of God in different lights. The ungodly cleanse themselves (as they imagine) from the smaller sins, that is, from those which are committed by the body, the grosser and viler part of man; while they all the time pass over the great sin, that is, that which they commit in the soul, their more important part, and yet see it not. Whereas, on the contrary, the godly consider it a very small matter to be cleansed from those lesser sins, unless they be cleansed from that greater sin which makes and causes many other sins, nay involves every sin. And I believe that the prophet designedly and purposely called this the 'much and great transgression,' (for the Hebrew word RAB has both these significations,) because all other sins are of that nature that each is a sin separately and of itself: but this great sin or transgression involves in it many other and great sins; because our works (which must of necessity be many) are rendered of the worst nature and infected with sin: which is ungodliness in the sight of God. Therefore, though this sin be one, yet it involves and comprehends "many other and great" sins; and hence, it is rightly called the great transgression.

Ver. 14.—*And the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, shall be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.*

The adverb "always" is here added by the translator.

The meaning of the verse is, If I shall be cleansed from the great sin or transgression, and if the proud shall not at all prevail against me; that is, if I shall be cleansed by faith which purifies the heart, and not by my own works, I shall be truly acceptable and well pleasing in thy sight : and when I shall be thus pleasing unto thee, then shall my words and my meditations be well pleasing also. For the tree that is good will produce fruit that is good. On the contrary, let no one presume to suppose that his words please thee, how specious soever they may be, if he be destitute of faith, and justified in his own estimation without it; for such an one is defiled by the great transgression.

These “words of the mouth and meditations of the heart,” although they may be understood as referring to common conversation and speaking, yet, in my opinion, they refer to the word of doctrine. For they who purely believe, straightway purely teach : according to that word of the Psalm cxvi. “I believed, and therefore have I spoken.” For faith does not lie buried and inactive, but goes forth and confesses God unto the salvation of others; as David had before said concerning the sun. And I believe it was with this intent that he added the words “of my mouth,” that he might shew that he meant the ministry of the Word. And therefore, the meaning of the whole is nearly the same as that of Psalm i. His leaf also shall not wither; and, look, whatsoever he doeth it shall prosper : for in that passage he speaks of the good fruits of the good tree in the same way as he does here : for here he says, in the same manner, if we are cleansed, our words shall please God, and he will cooperate with them and confirm them, and will make them prosper, and run, and be glorified unto the conversion of the adversaries : as we have it, Prov. xvi. “When a man’s ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” But if we be not thus cleansed and clean, what shall prevent us from being displeasing unto God, from having all our words to fail of success, and from turning the enemies by them unto war?

Nor is it in vain that he adds “in thy sight :” for the

words of pure faith are hated of all men, as Christ foretold they would be, Matt. v. and xiii.; because they crucify the old man, and convince the world of sin: which is well pleasing in the sight of God, but intolerable in the sight of men: and yet, as such declarers of the truth please God, they prosper, in defiance of the world.

And in consequence of this very thing it is that he calls the Lord his helper (which in the Hebrew is *ZURI*, that is 'my Rock') and his Redeemer: not only because God redeems him from sins and from hypocrites, and sets him upon the rock of pure faith, but because he makes him persevering and victorious against all the adversaries of the Word, by giving him the confidence and strength of the Spirit to speak: as we have it Jeremiah i. "Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." And so also Acts iv. the apostles were praying that they might be enabled to speak the Word with boldness against the Jews: and immediately the place was moved, and they, being filled with the Spirit, spoke with all boldness and confidence.

What this "Meditation" is, we have seen abundantly, Psalm i. and ix.: it is an exercising of the Word unto teaching: as we are taught, Psalm xlix. 3, "My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. Wherefore these expressions may be considered as a repetition, or else the one was an explanation of the other.

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## PSALM XX.

TO VICTORY: A PSALM OF DAVID.

Ver. 1.—*The Lord hear thee in the day of tribulation; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*

Almost all expound this Psalm as having reference to Christ: but I think such an exposition of it is rather

too remote, and not sufficiently literal. Wherefore, I think the Psalm, in a more plain and simple sense, is a certain Litany or holy supplication for magistrates and those who are placed in high stations: for whom the Apostle, 1 Tim. ii. commands us ‘ first of all to pray, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.’ And, that I may say what I think, David seems to me to have sent forth this Psalm as a certain kind of religious and holy trumpet-sound, whereby he might animate both himself and the people to pray and to act in a godly manner in warlike matters, when fighting against the enemies of godliness, such as we consider the Turks to be.

The whole Psalm, throughout every particular part of it, tends to set forth this,—that a prince of the people should presume upon no powers of his own, trust to no wealth, and rely on no human counsels: according to that of Psalm xxxiii. 16, 17, “ There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing to save a man: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.” But let him wait for help from heaven, and know, that it is from heaven that all victory comes; let him hope in the Lord alone, and wrestle with him in prayer, like Moses of old.

Hence, the prophet here offers up his own prayer, and at the same time teaches us a necessary doctrine, and a doctrine which princes very rarely observe: for there would be a less number of wars and far more happy victories, if, after the rule of this Psalm, they were led to see that there is more power in praying than in fighting princes: and then also they would be truly the representatives of God upon the earth, and would be divine princes: they would then not fight, unless compelled and called so to do in a just cause and in humility of heart.—Hence it is that the Psalm begins at once thus, “ The Lord hear thee:” thereby leading the prince to look upwards unto God, that he might undertake and do whatever is before him by God’s counsel and help.

“ In the day of tribulation.” And here, princes are reminded of their duty, that they may know that they

are placed in high stations for the safety and well-being of their people: for which they have to labour and suffer much: so that their rulership is a day of tribulation indeed. For they are not worthy the name of princes who are always at their ease and voluptuous, and who reign only for themselves; such are not worthy to seek these high offices at the hands of God; nay, they are not princes at all, but swine wallowing in their mire. He who seeks from his heart the safety and well-being of his people, will never be without tribulation, for Satan and the whole world will be ever against him.

“The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.” It is not the sword that is to defend such a prince and ruler, nor the shield, nor the breast-plate, nor any thing but the name of God: as we have it, Psalm xlv. 6, “For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.”—And how, and with what arms shall the name of God defend him? By faith and calling upon God; as Joel saith, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” And Prov. xviii. 10, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is exalted.” Thus he shall be defended (or exalted) by an invisible power. For the same word which is in this passage of David, and in that of Prov. xviii. signifies rather “exalted” than ‘saved or protected:’ as we have it, Isaiah vii. ‘And the Lord shall lift up the enemies of Rezin above him.’ Hence, a ruler of the people must be a partaker of pure faith and confidence in God, that he may neither presume upon his own strength and powers, nor despair under a sense of his impotency: for ‘it is the same thing with the Lord to save by many or by few:’ as we have it, 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

And David has here appropriately and seasonably said the “name of the God of *Jacob*,” not commending the name of God under the epithet ‘of the God of Israel,’ or any other. For Jacob, being derived from a Hebrew word, which signifies ‘a foot,’ signifies ‘a supplanter:’ which most appropriately applies to adversaries who are to be supplanted, and to the day of

tribulation: shewing, that a prince or ruler of the people shall by such means come off defended, and the conqueror and supplanter of all his enemies.

Ver. 2.—*Send thee help from the sanctuary, (or holy place) and defend thee out of Zion.*

Instead of “defend thee” Hieronymus has it “strengthen thee:” which is more expressive of that confidence and strength of heart with which, whosoever is strengthened, he immediately becomes conqueror over, and rises above, every evil. For the Lord defends and strengthens all *his* within. On the contrary, the world defends and strengthens itself from without. And this is what he means when he says “from the sanctuary,” and “out of Zion.” For we have observed that “sanctuary,” or ‘holy place,’ signifies ‘separate,’ ‘hidden,’ and ‘invisible,’ where sense attaineth not unto, and which reason comprehendeth not: so that “from the sanctuary,” signifies from heaven, from God alone; who dwelleth in his sanctuary or holy place. Wherein David beautifully intimates the nature of faith: which believeth that which it seeth not, and firmly expects and waits for help, still not knowing from whence it will come. On the contrary, the ungodly man seeks and expects help from the profane place, and from that place which lieth open to sense. But vain is the help of man.

“And strengthen thee out of Zion,” is the same as the preceding expression, and is a repetition; for we are strengthened by help. So that this repeated petition shews the increase of feeling in the heart that is praying, and contains an indication of waiting and expectation in that heart. But why is it said “out of Zion,” and not out of Egypt or Babylon? David here speaks as things were in his times: for the Lord then dwelt and was worshipped in Zion, and no where else. As if he had said, ‘Look not for, and be not careful about things without thee, but expect and wait for the strength of God within thee; he will come unto thee if thou depart not and go not away; he will strengthen thee if thou seek to be strengthened no where else; for he cometh

not unto them that flee, but unto them that firmly and constantly wait for him.' Nor does David in this nor any other verse seek to escape tribulation by flight, but he waits with constancy before the face of trouble, expecting to conquer by faith in the name of God. Thus it is that God defends every one of *his* and strengthens him out of himself, and not by the help of man. Examples of this we have in the people of Israel, whom the Lord delivered so often without the help of any of the nations around them; nay, with all those nations against them; and he delivered them thus by his presence alone in Jerusalem and in Zion, where his true worship was. And as often as they expected help from Egypt or from Assyria and not from Zion, so often they fell, and, leaning upon this broken reed, were destroyed with the greater destruction.

And the expression "out of Zion," has its peculiar emphasis; it means, 'the place of sight,' not only because we see by faith, or have the presence of God, but because his eyes are open upon us: as we have it, Psalm xxxiv. 15, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." And Psalm xxxii. 8, "I will fix mine eyes upon thee:" and this God did of old upon Zion alone, which he then made elect unto himself. Now, his Zion is to be found wherever men believe in God throughout the whole world: for wherever he is believed in, there the God of gods in Zion dwells: as we have it, Psalm iv. where we have shewn what is meant by the Lord lifting up the light of his countenance upon us. And rightly does this verse follow the preceding: for to be exalted and lifted up above his enemies in the name of the Lord, happens unto no prince but unto him whose heart is strengthened from above: so that David in this verse gives us the cause and reason of the preceding.

*Ver. 3.—Remember all thy offerings and accept thy fat burnt sacrifice.*

This verse is again a repetition, as are nearly all the verses in the Psalm. The first two verses commended the *person* unto God, which person can never be well

pleasing in the sight of God but by pure faith. For these two following verses the Psalmist commends the *works* of the person in a right and beautiful order: for thus God had first respect unto Abel, and then unto his offerings and gifts. Moreover, this verse commends the sacrifice, and the following their motives and desires. So that doing, is before talking; and sacrifice, before petitioning. For many say, 'Lord, Lord,' but do not the will of the Father, nay, they do quite the contrary: and, therefore, even their prayer is sin.

And here we see again that prayer is only found in a good and godly prince; for the ungodly prince prays not that he may be heard, neither does he believe that he may be strengthened from above, although he may outwardly offer sacrifice, or rather, pretend to offer sacrifice. But David does not make this prince of his to sacrifice, but prays for the best of blessings to come upon him while sacrificing. Unless, perhaps, you will say, that the sacrifice of the prince is the common sacrifice of the people, among whom there are some godly; by whose prayers he also is prayed for that he may be a good prince and may be saved.

This verse shews that it was David who wrote this Psalm, in order that he might be prayed for by the singers whom he had himself instituted: because, sacrifices and burnt-offerings were Mosaic rites, which, under the new law, are done away. But yet, it does not therefore follow that this Psalm is not to be used as a prayer at this day, and by other persons. For as there are other persons, other causes, other times, and other places, under the new law; so also, there is another sacrifice. And yet, it is the same faith, the same spirit, which remain through all ages, times, places, and persons. The external things vary, but the internal things remain the same. For there is not in all the same work, but there is the same faith. There is not every where the same servant, but there is the same God. There are diversities of graces, but it is the same spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but it is the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is



the same God that worketh all in all. Thus, he that willed to have circumcision in Abraham, wills to have baptism in us: both with the same will, and required to be with the same faith, and yet, with a different operation. For the church has stood in Christ from the beginning, and has been a steward of the manifold grace of God, according to the diversity of its members, of times, places, and causes; which are changeable and various, though the church herself remains ever one and the same.

What then is our sacrifice?—In some ages the sacrament of the bread and wine has been accounted the greatest sacrifice; but, as I have said elsewhere, it was an impious opinion and tenet. For under the new law there is no temple, (as we see in the Revelation in the description of the new Jerusalem) nor sacrifice; for this temple Daniel foretold, chap. ix. 27, should cease.—We ourselves are the temple of God! as Paul teaches, 1 Cor. iii. And so also we are the city of God and his sacrifice, and all those things which were figured forth of old time, and are now figured forth, in the material temples and offerings. Hence, the Apostle said, Rom. xii. 1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto the Lord, which is your reasonable service.”

Here, therefore, I will omit all the various interpretations, of the meaning of the ancient sacrifices, and content myself with those two which David sets forth to us in the 50th Psalm, “He that offereth me praise glorifieth me.” And Psalm iv. “Offer the sacrifice of righteousness.” And Psalm li. “The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit.” And Daniel, to the same purpose, says, chap. iii. (Song of the Three Children, chap. i. 16, 17,) “Nevertheless in a contrite heart and an humble spirit, let us be accepted. Like as in the burnt-offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs, so let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, and grant that we may wholly go after thee: for they shall not be confounded that put their trust in thee.” And Hosea xiv. 2, “Take away all iniquity and receive us.

graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips." And Heb. xiii. 15, "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually: that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name." And Psalm cxvi. 17, "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord." And Psalm lii. 9, "I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name, for it is good before thy saints." And the like.

Our sacrifice, therefore, which we offer unto thee in the day of tribulation, is a contrite heart and the confession of sin: that is, we in the day of tribulation groan unto God, acknowledging our tribulation, patiently enduring our mortification, and willingly offering ourselves up to be moulded into all the will of God. And this is what is signified by all that numerous history, with its slaughterings, its sacrifices, its blood, its burnings, and the like, which were commanded in the law of Moses. That fire which consumed all those things signified the flame of the Holy Spirit, which pours love into our hearts, and which consumes every thing of the flesh and of the old birth which remains in us. And this is the burnt sacrifice; that is, a giving up ourselves wholly to be consumed by this fire, that we may be dead unto ourselves, and live unto God; and that our members, which before were servants unto iniquity, may now become the servants of righteousness; and that, in all these things, we may confess unto God, and praise him, and give him thanks. And that wood which was used as fuel for the fire on the altars, signified the words of the Gospel; and the knives by which the animals were slain the words of the law, which slay the old man, and which strip us of our old skin, and lay us upon the altar of Christ. For all things must be done by faith in Christ.

And what is this "fat burnt sacrifice?" Most certainly, it is an allegorical expression to signify a full, rich, delightful, and well-pleasing sacrifice. For "fat" is a figure that mystically signifies abundance and delightfulness. Gen. xlix. 20, "Asher, his bread shall

be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." And Psalm xvii. we have said, that the "fat" of the ungodly is their great men, their rich ones, their chosen, delicate, and voluptuous ones. The allegory is borrowed from general use among men, who are delighted with fat and well-fed or choice cattle.

Of Sela, which is added at the end of this verse, we have shewn the meaning and signification in former Psalms. It is an indication of a certain special and secret affection, produced by the Spirit for the time, in the offering up of this burnt sacrifice; of which, no one knows any thing but he who receives it, and in whom it is produced.

*Ver. 4.—Grant thee according to thine own heart, and confirm all thy counsel.*

We are certainly to take the greatest care, that we pray not thus for tyrants, and such princes as seek only their own. (Unless we understand it in this way,—that there is no prince who does not wish his own to flourish and to be in peace, seeing that it is for peace that wars are carried on, and that thus, we pray for their civil prosperity.) But David is rather to be understood as leaving this prayer on record to be put up for a good prince. For he that is truly such is attacked with many adversaries, and especially by those very bad tyrants before mentioned; and therefore such an one stands in need of divine help, by which his counsels and desires against them may be fulfilled. For we are not to pray for tyrants, but for those whom they oppress unjustly. And here also the children of Israel did not pray for their enemies, but for David their king, who was labouring to overcome his adversaries.

And most certainly as things are at this day we ought to pray not only for our king, for princes, and for rulers, that their heart and counsels may be fulfilled, but that their heart may be opened, and that they may understand who are the true enemies of the church, against whom they ought to consult, and against whom they ought to set themselves. For as long as they are

blind, and see not how unjust the oppressions of our adversaries is, how can they consult and how can we pray that their counsels may be fulfilled? And yet we may see some among them who are not blind, and who wish well to our cause: in behalf of these then let us pray, and ardently pray, 'The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel:' or, as our translator has it, 'confirm all thy counsel.'

Ver. 5.—*We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God will be lifted up on high. The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.*

This word "we will rejoice" signifies, as we have shewn, Psalm v. vocal joy, or a sweetness of words in which men are accustomed to vent and express their joy. Here it is spoken in a way of exhortation, and, as it were, used or given to be used by those who enter into battle, and who, with an exalted confidence, boast in the help of God, which shall be displayed in their salvation. As those cried out, Judges vii. 20, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." And as we have it in Joshua vi. 20, 'And the people shouted, and the walls of Jericho fell down.' And king Abiah, crying out with his men in the same, killed five hundred thousand of the children of Israel. And so now also, according to the military custom in our day, the soldiers boast in the name and glory of their general, in order to encourage themselves against their enemies. And it is just this custom that the present verse is now teaching, only in a godly and religious manner.

And this sense of the passage is confirmed by the following word, "we will be lifted up:" which is quite improperly so rendered by our translator, and is translated by Hieronymus 'we will lead dances.' Nor is this sufficiently correct. Others say it should be 'we will be renowned, signalized.' Others again will have it that it is a camp term: for *DEGEL* signifies a standard or ensign of an army. And hence they will have it that this word *NIDGOL* signifies the same as if we should say 'We will set up our banners,' or, (if we may use such an ex-

pression,) ‘We will banner it’ (*ve.villabimur*): which is the very work of those who enter to the battle: for they not only shout with their voices, but brandish their ensigns: as the men of Gideon not only sounded with their trumpets and voices, but moved about and broke their pitchers, which they had in the room of banners.

Hence “in thy salvation;” that is, calling on thy salvation by faith, we will rejoice and cry out with shouts. And, “in the name;” that is, by calling on thy name. And in the same faith we will set up our banners; that is, in thy name and not in our own, and in thy power and not in our own; and in this confidence will we enter into the battle with all our enemies: for “The Lord is our strength and our salvation.” And if in a profane and temporal war it is so necessary to cry out for the salvation of God and to set up our banners in his name; how much more necessary is it for us Christian generals and champions, while we war against spiritual wickedness in high places, against the wisdom of the flesh, against heresies, that we may not set up our ensigns, our honours, and our trophies, in our own name to bring about our own salvation? that is, that we boast not of, and set not up, philosophy, human traditions, decrees, and other monstrous bugbears of our own name and power, as our high priests and popes do now-a-days. Our standard is the Word of the cross, the triumphal ensign dyed purple with the blood of Christ, which the church of Christ, “who is terrible as an army with banners,” opposes to all the powers of darkness. And to set aside that Word and fight without it, is nothing more than to play like children on holidays.

“The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.” And this is also exhortatory and expressive of the confidence of one entering into battle. As if he had said, We go in the name of the Lord, and fight under thy standard, O king, in obedience to thee our king and our leader: the Lord will accomplish his own word, and may he fulfil all thy petitions. It is ours not to know what is to befall us, and yet to obey thee. Thus Joab, 2 Sam. x. 12, the chief general of David, seeing that the battle was against

him: before and behind, put the victory into the hands of the Lord, saying, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

Ver. 6.—*Now know I that the Lord will save his anointed: he will hear him from his holy heaven, the salvation of his right hand is in powers.*

Being now lifted up into an all-certain hope, he confidently promises to himself those things for which he had before prayed: for thus does an affection towards God that is full of confidence, infallibly persuade itself of a successful event: and such an affection these words indicate. As if he had said, 'Come, let us attempt the point, and let us know and be fully persuaded that God will save his anointed. For it is impossible that God should not hear him who rests in God with such an affection and such faith: 'for there is no confusion to them that trust in him: they shall never be confounded:' as we have it, Dan. iii. (Song of the Three Children i.) "He is the Saviour of all that trust in him:" as we have it Psalm xvii. And therefore it is that David here says, "Now know I that the Lord saveth."

This is an exhortatory voice of the most firm faith, which persuades itself, or rather which is persuaded from the affection above-mentioned. For he that is of that frame of spirit as to be emboldened to say, "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in thy name will we set up our banners," is at the same time most certain that he will not be left; which is indeed most true and certain; but this no man can feel but the person who is so affected. Hence Paul is emboldened to say, Rom. viii. 38, 'For I am persuaded that neither life nor death, &c. shall ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' And elsewhere, 2 Tim. i. 12, "For I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." For the man whose heart saith 'I believe,' can with an infallible confidence and consequence say, 'I am persuaded that it will be as I believe.' For if the faith be true faith in the

heart, it so certainly affirms that which it believeth, that it is certain it cannot be otherwise than it believeth, and therefore it is as much assured of it as if it had really taken place. And therefore the man with David does not say 'I imagine, or think, or I so understand it;' but, "I know," or I am persuaded that he will save: that is, I am certain, and am fully assured. And St. Paul speaks just in the same way, only in his own manner of expression.

This again is another argument against those impious sophists who would make us to be at an uncertainty about the grace and love of God in us; who say, that it is rash to assert, that we love God, or believe in him, or are sure of his work in us. Whereas nothing is more abominable than this feeding of uncertainties. And the Hebrew expressions and idioms here are very beautiful; wherein, the verb "I know," in the *perfect*, (whereby faith is commanded) is immediately joined to a verb in the *future*, "he will hear," (whereby is expressed the work that is believed in.) Hereby, therefore, the mouths of them are stopped who speak iniquity, that they may know, that the works of God which are hereafter to be in and for us are believed by us, as much as if they were already perfected and past. Hence it is that the prophecies are most frequently found in the perfect tense, and especially in the Hebrew; not only on account of the certainty of the prophecy's being fulfilled, but more especially in order to set forth and teach us the real nature of faith.

I cannot sufficiently wonder how it is that these sophists can do this. For, when they all to a man believe in the articles concerning the second coming of Christ, the last judgment, eternal life, and hell fire; when they know that these things will surely come to pass, and call all those heretics who doubt of these things, or are uncertain in them; and when they immediately proclaim a man a heretic if he doubts of the creation, the incarnation, or any of the past mysteries of Christ;—I cannot think, I say, how it is that they can do this, and yet declare that it is the right and catholic

faith for a man to doubt whether he is under grace; whether he enjoys any communication of mercy in partaking of the Lord's Supper in faith; whether or not he has God propitious unto him. And this last indeed is the first and most important article of all: where we say 'I believe in God the Father Almighty.' Such men are blind! blind! and leaders of the blind! They believe in God concerning the past and the future, but do not believe in him concerning the present. Let us, however, with the prophet, with confidence and present knowledge, say, '*Now* know I that the Lord helpeth his anointed.' Concerning the expressions knowing, and comprehending, and understanding, I shall speak more at large hereafter. And concerning 'heaven' and 'holy place' we have spoken, verse 2.

"The salvation of his right hand is in powers."— This expression again is exhortative and tending to encourage a faith which shall rest securely in the Lord for his help. It is as if we should say in our way and according to our usage of language, I know that he will hear him, and powerfully save him. For it is a Hebrew figure of speech, when it is said "The salvation of his right hand is in powers." It is the same as we have, Psalm cxviii. 16, "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." That is, when the right hand of the Lord saves, there is no adverse power which can destroy: because his salvation is not only powerful, or, in power, but also in "powers:" that is powerful in many ways. For although this plural noun sounds barbarously in other languages, yet it shews the great excellence of faith which ascribes unto God so much power and wisdom that he can save not in one way only, but in many ways, though unto them that are distressed there appears no way at all. And the expression has a wonderful force and emphatic power indicating a fulness of confidence in, and a cleaving affection to, the all-encouraging power of God.

The Hebrew might be rendered thus: Now know I that the Lord helpeth his anointed, and will hear him from his holy heaven, in the power of the salvation of



his right hand. So that the whole rests on the word "He will hear," which, in the Hebrew, bears the signification of 'He will answer.' So that the sense and meaning are, He will hear him by powerfully saving him with his own right hand, and not by the hand of another, or by the power of man. And thus the verse strikes at the dependance upon any human help: and the force of the whole lies in the expression "of his right hand." And this rendering of the passage pleases me much; though it differs not much from the former.

"His anointed." We ought generally to receive this as signifying a king, because kings were of old anointed. And this word again increases a confidence of our prayer being heard and of salvation being vouchsafed unto us. For, for a man to know that he is called to a certain work, adds fortitude and increase of spiritual strength: for he knows that he does the work that he does by the will and command of God. All such an one's care is not to trust in his own pride of strength, but to be contented with a commanding God, and humbly to seek his help at all times. Thus David encourages himself, Psalm vii. 6, 'Awake, O Lord God, for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.' And here he says in a brief expression 'to the help of his anointed:' that is, to the help of him whom he has anointed and appointed king, and who is doing that which he commanded him to do. Hence David is described as fighting the battles of the Lord; that is, the battles which the Lord appointed and commanded him to fight. On the other hand, those who are not called and appointed, attempt all things utterly in vain, as the children of Israel shew by a memorable example, Numb. xiv. And therefore it was that he wished to say, "his anointed," rather than 'his king;' that he might encourage himself by the command of God, not by his own advantage, as all the crowd of warriors do at this day.

Here David, as a most religious king, though he was powerful in his strength, yet published abroad this Psalm in order that he might instruct the people, on what kind

of a confidence and on what strength he would have them believe that he depended. He sets aside and puts a stop to all the foolish applause of the multitude, who think that their kings can do any thing, and refers all to the mercy of God: and therefore 'the salvation of the right hand of God was with him in powers.' But as to us, the destruction of our left hand in weaknesses still goes on as ever. And what wonder is it that in all our warlike transactions our kings have nothing of this powerful salvation of God's right hand like David, when our faith in Christ, above all other things, is not like his!

*Ver. 7.—Some [trust] in chariots and some in horses; but we will pray in the name of the Lord our God.*

This is a beautiful omission of a word; for the verb, which is 'fight in,' or 'presume upon,' is here understood. And there is here a most striking contrariety, setting forth pure and firm faith. They depend on horses, but we in the name of the Lord. They trust in the strength of visible things, but we in the name of him who is invisible. They proceed by sight, we by faith.—And in this place instead of "we will pray in," the Hebrew is 'we will be mindful of.' And Hieronymus renders it 'we will remember the name of the Lord our God.'

This is a wonderful exhortation and description of a conflict. Here the enemies are represented as fighting on horses and in chariots, but the righteous in the remembrance of the name of the Lord only. And certainly, that faith is great which dares such things in the remembrance only of the name of the Lord. And this is the case with warriors at this day also—that when they enter on the battle, they call to their remembrance either the brave deeds of their ancestors, or their own former victories, or other things that tend to rouse up and encourage their spirits. But our principal thing is to remember the name of the Lord in which stands all salvation and all victory. As we have it, Prov. xviii. 10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe;" or, 'shall be exalted:' that

is, shall exult and be conqueror. And 'he runneth into it:' that is, by faith in, and in remembrance of, the name of the Lord.

And there is a remarkable emphasis in the expression "we will remember," that can be known to none but those who experience it. And without doubt, the prophet is here setting forth his own experience. For who would ever think that any one should come off conqueror only by remembering the name of the Lord, unless he had himself experienced it? And again, who but he that has experienced it, would believe that it was so difficult a thing to remember the name of the Lord? Who would believe this, but he who has felt that death, fear of shame, conscience, and a thousand other perils, attack the soul more violently within than all the forces of the enemy can attack it without? For it is in the midst of these things that the soul is so distracted in the midst of the perils which are within it, around it, and rushing upon it, that it is in danger of losing sight of the name of the Lord! Nor is it enough merely to think of and call upon the name of the Lord at the first, but we must remember the name of the Lord with a persevering and constant remembering, yea, even unto the end of the victory against all the perilous and terrible things that may oppose themselves unto us. For, as it is impossible that the name of the Lord should be overcome, as it is eternal and omnipotent, so it is impossible that he should fall who trusts in it and perseveringly cleaves unto it.

Ver. 8.—*They are bound and have fallen; but we have risen, and stand upright.*

This is not spoken historically, or at least, not historically only, but rather prophetically, yea, the rather still, in the confidence of faith: for it belongs to faith only to sing the triumphal song before the victory is gained, and to make the proclamation before the salvation is wrought: because faith can do all things and to it all things are lawful: for while it believes it has those things which it believeth. Faith deceives not; but, as it be-

lieves so is it done unto it. So Moses, *Exod. xiv. 13, 14*, strengthens the trembling people, under their fears of the pursuing Egyptians, with the most certain assurance of victory; saying, "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of God, which he will shew you this day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever: the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." And so it came to pass; for Pharaoh, who presumed upon his horses and his chariots, was utterly destroyed in the waters.

Instead of "are bound," Hieronymus has it much better, with the Hebrew, 'are bent down,' or 'bend down,' in an absolute verb: whereby is intimated the deficiency of those who presume upon their own strength, which, when the hand of God is taken away, fails and sinks under its own weight, even though the enemy should not attack it at all.—And in this verse we have also a beautiful contrariety set forth. Here are 'bowed down' and 'risen' in opposition to each other: and also, 'standing upright' and 'falling:' for the righteous are said to stand upright. And moreover, by bowing down and falling, David represents the failing of natural strength; even as, by 'rising' and 'standing upright,' he sets forth the efficacy of the divine. For to be bent or bowed down, is to be weakened and to fall, and to be utterly conquered; but to rise, is to prevail; and to stand, is to conquer. By these expressions, therefore, we have the thing itself set as it were before our eyes, and transacted before us, in order to call forth our faith in God. For this is the case,—that the one first bows down, and then falls; the other first rises up, and then stands firm and victorious.

But what is meant by all this? It may be said, perhaps, that, when David affirms that the enemies are bowed down and fall, he must at the same time intimate, that they before rose and stood upright: and that, when he makes the godly to rise up and stand, it must be implied, that they were before bowed down and fallen.—Far be it from us to understand the passage thus. These words are words of faith, which speak of things future

as if they were passed, and speak of them too with the fullest confidence, and represent them before the eyes of men as the things themselves would be transacted. For in the conflict with the enemy, while the ungodly trust in their horses and their chariots, they seem most certainly to rise and stand. On the other hand, the godly, who trust in the name of the Lord, seem to be altogether unequal to them, and to bow down and fall. But faith, struggling against all this outward appearance which seems formidable to sense, boasts thus—Although they may rise and stand on their horses and in their chariots, and we may seem to bow down and fall, yet, we are assured that the face of things will in a short time be changed, and that those who now rise and stand will be bowed down and will fall; and that we, who seem to be bowed and to fall, shall most surely rise and stand upright, nay, are now risen and stand upright.—O beautiful description of faith!

*Ver. 9.—O Lord, save the king; and hear us in the day in which we call upon thee.*

According to our translation, this verse may be taken as a conclusion or confirmation of the whole. But the Hebrew punctuates it thus, ‘Save, Lord: let the King hear us in the day in which we call.’ Wherein there lies something of a mystery: for it is not ‘hear us,’ but, ‘let him hear us,’ in the third person, as we have it in the beginning of the Psalm, “The Lord hear thee.” And here we have also “King” in the nominative case, and not in the accusative. And moreover the pronoun *thee* is not at the end of the verse in the Hebrew.

If there be any thing of secret mystery here, I shall leave it to the spiritual to find out what it is, while I in the mean time shall content myself with the most simple sense, and consider, that by “King,” here, is meant God himself, in the third person: as we have it in the beginning of the Psalm, “The Lord hear thee.” And Moses also, Numb. xiv. 17, “And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken.” And also, Psalm iii. 8, “Salvation belongeth

unto the Lord, and thy blessing is upon thy people." And Numb. xxvii. 16, "And let the Lord set a man over the congregation;" that is, 'Do thou, O Lord,' &c. And Gen. xli. 33, "Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise."

And so here, "Let the King hear us." For this is a powerful expression, as if it were, 'Do thou, who art truly our King, hear us. For David, who ministers unto thee, is not our great king, nor does he hold his own kingdom but thine. For we are thy kingdom, and thou art our King.' By which feelings David powerfully moves, and teaches us to move, God, who is then moved when we are moved. For how shall the Lord not hear when his kingdom, his inheritance, and his glory, are in danger? That is, we then the most ardently pray when we feel a confidence that we are the kingdom and part of the inheritance of the Lord: for then we are not seeking our own, and we are sure that God will not forsake the things that are his, and the kingdom that is his; and especially when we call upon him. Concerning which feelings we have spoken more fully, Psalm vii. This verse, therefore, asks of God a general and continued salvation, in this manner,—As thou hast saved and heard us, so do thou at all times: on whatever day we may call upon thee, do thou hear and save us. And so also he that has once experienced the help of the Lord, wishes that that help may be perpetual, and he fears lest at any time it should forsake him.

Thus have we expounded this Psalm as an example of faith, and concerning a certain king: but I am not certain whether I have attained unto the true sense of it. For although the banners, the horses, and the chariots, compel us to understand the Psalm as referring to the external battle; yet, I will not dare to say that the Psalm is not to be understood of Christ, and that the Psalmist speaks of banners, &c. in a spiritual sense. And to this understanding of the Psalm I am inclined by many parts of the scripture, and especially by Psalm cx; wherein Christ is commanded to sit as King, and to rule in the midst of his enemies; and it is said

that his sceptre is sent out of Zion, and that the kings of the earth are moved and shaken, &c. all which things, though they seem to refer to material and carnal things, yet are spoken wholly in the Spirit, and are to be so understood. And to shew the same, we might adduce Psalm lxxii. and Psalm ii. where “rod of iron” is used in a spiritual sense. And thus we might easily understand banners here in the same spiritual sense. For there appears to me to be nothing to prevent the Psalm being understood of Christ; excepting that, we have purposed to avoid allegory as much as possible, and because this Psalm is not quoted in the New Testament like the others. And again, the following Psalm, powerfully moves us to understand this Psalm of Christ; and it is probable that it speaks of the same King as this Psalm does; as we shall see when we come to it.

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PERHAPS, however, it might be the more safe way just to set forth the Psalm in that meaning in which it refers to Christ, that it might thus be submitted to the judgment and pleasure of the reader to understand it as he thinks best.

According to this understanding of it, therefore, the prophet, in the person of the believing people, who have here nothing to do with carnal wars, prays for their King, who is himself the leader of this same people in their spiritual war, fights with and for them against the powers and gates of hell. And the fight and contest of the Word and faith are matters of the greatest moment, and not to be compared to any other conflicts: for therein we fight, not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickednesses in high places; not for life or these momentary things, but for eternal things; that is, for righteousness, against sin and errors.

But who knows but that the Psalm may be understood as applying, in a general way, to both: like that of 2 Sam. vii. “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a Son:” which may be understood either of Solomon or Christ. And many other passages: such

as that of Matt. ii. 'A voice in Ramah,' which may be understood concerning the children of the captivity, or concerning the children killed by Herod.

Let us, therefore, set before our eyes Christ with his company of martyrs contending and dying for the truth and kingdom of God against the violence of tyrants: these tyrants were superior in strength and in arms, and yet they were conquered. This sense of the passage may easily be derived from that which we have before set forth; for the faith in both cases is the same, though the cause is different. For here, <sup>in</sup> bodily, Christ and his martyrs yield; but there they are conquerors. And it is the same spirit that operates in both cases, making intercession for Christ and his saints with "groanings that cannot be uttered," and at the same time helping them in the words of the Psalm.

Let us, therefore, just set the Psalm forth again briefly as applying to Christ and his martyrs.

*The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble.*—As there is no one that can comfort, and as it is thou and thy saints alone that suffer in this thy passion, may the Lord comfort thee and hear thee, and save thee from all thine enemies. For there is no doubt that Christ and his saints groaned by the Spirit with these unutterable feelings; and we must groan thus in and by the same Spirit, in death and tribulation.

*The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*—For there is nothing left but the name of God only: by calling upon which it is that the righteous are defended: and on which prayer, as on a most slender thread, the salvation of the sufferer depends and hangs: for all other things not only do not preserve the soul, but work together with those who destroy it.

*Send thee help from the sanctuary.*—But this it is that so wonderfully exercises and tortures the soul,—to hang on the name of God only, and to expect no help but an invisible help, and that from an invisible God, who dwells in the most secret sanctuary, or holy place. And yet, the Spirit with this groan helps those who are under sufferings, and supports them with a feeling expect-



tation of this ineffable and unnamable help, though it is with the greatest labour.

*And defend thee out of Zion.*—Zion, as I have before said, is the same as holy! The man expects, and feels that he expects; and that is all he can do. He can do nothing but feel that he expects help out of Zion, the secret habitation of God, in order that he might at length overcome his tribulation.

*Remember all thy sacrifice.*—That is, that sacrifice by which thou offerest up thyself to God even unto death. For here, in these tribulations, unless the groaning of the Spirit should suggest unto thee, that thou art not yet given over to forgetfulness in the thoughts of God, thy infirmity would believe from that very thing which thou sufferest, and under which thou givest thyself over unto God, that thou wert given over to oblivion and damned. For this is the way in which the flesh would murmur; saying and suggesting unto thee,—All thy suffering is in vain: God will never, after all, be mindful of this thy sacrifice.

*That thy burnt-offering may be fat.*—That is, abundant, fruitful, and full. But here we must understand this burnt-offering, as we did the sacrifice, in a spiritual sense, as we have before observed. Thus, Christ offered up himself wholly upon the cross to be consumed by the fire of love. And here, instead of “all thy sacrifice,” it might be rendered ‘the whole of thy sacrifice.’ Even as burnt sacrifice (*holocaustum*) signifies the whole of it being burnt with fire. By which groaning of the Spirit, he shews and teaches the righteous, that they should pray and hope that none of their sufferings shall be vain, but that all shall be well-pleasing, remembered, and fully acceptable. But this the righteous expect with so faint a hope, being so infirm, that they seem rather to wish for it, than to hope that it will so be.

*Grant thee according to thine heart, and confirm (or fulfil) all thy counsel.*—The Spirit leads them to expect all these things, although their infirmity all the while dictates to them, both that their desires will be vain, and their counsels of nought.—I consider that in

these four verses are set forth the nature and power of that "groaning that cannot be uttered:" and so beautifully set forth, that they seem as if they were presented to us as a pattern and an example.—And now, there will follow more joyful things; seeing that, tribulation brings us on in the road to victory.

*We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God will we be exalted. The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.*—Concerning this boasting, and this setting up of our banners, we have spoken before. Thus Christ and his martyrs, even though they die, feel a confidence in themselves, exult in the salvation of God, and brandish and set up their banners, and they preach and confess Christ the more, the more they are oppressed. And even though they should themselves be slain, they feel a confidence that others after them and in their stead will proclaim Christ; with whom they are one body, and so also have one and the same soul. And they feel no doubt of that being fulfilled even in the teeth of these tyrants, which Christ asked: as we have it, Psalm ii. 8, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And this request he obtained in the exulting and standard-lifting martyrs; that is, in those who confessed him with confidence, preached him, and died for him.

*Now know I that the Lord hath holpen his anointed: he will hear him from his holy heaven: the salvation of his right hand is in powers.*—This may be set forth as we have expounded it above. For he saved Christ and heard him, when he multiplied his church, and fulfilled all his requests. And he heard him in the powers of his right hand: that is, in the way in which his right hand is wont to save: which hand never saves any but the impotent. For God is powerful in the weak, good in the evil, and kind in the rebellious. And thus does the Holy Spirit teach us to consider God and to expect help from him.

*Some [trust] in horses, and some in chariots: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.*—The mean-

ing of this is quite clear from what has been said upon the passage above. Tyrants trust in their own powers, but the martyrs of Christ only in remembering the name of the Lord, and calling perpetually upon it.

*They are bowed down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright.*—For thus it was that the church increased and was strengthened by that very means by which it was oppressed: and the ungodly tyrants were destroyed in the midst of their very strength: and so we see all these things fulfilled by experience. Though there are others who fall as martyrs, and others who rise as believers: yet, because the people is one, the prophet, by a collective expression, which is a very usual manner of speaking in the scriptures, applies that to the whole which is strictly applicable to a part only: though, in truth, those that are martyrs in the Spirit rise, while many succeed them in faith:

*Save, Lord: the king shall hear thee in the day in which thou callest upon him.*—The meaning of this will be the same as we before set it forth.

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## PSALM XXI.

TO VICTORY: A PSALM OF DAVID.

Ver. 1.—*The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation shall he greatly rejoice.*

THIS Psalm is the same almost in every respect as the preceding: so that here I am not fully assured whether it speaks of Christ alone, or whether we are to understand it of any other king: and it is wonderful, that where the words are so clear and plain, the understanding of them should be so obscure. The Psalm, however, evidently seems upon the whole to be a certain giving of thanks for having received those things for

which he prayed in the preceding Psalm. So that it is a kind of triumphal song in honour of Christ rising from the dead. And as in my interpretation of the former Psalm, I have shewn that it represented the prefiguring king; so now, I shall interpret this Psalm as representing that King that was prefigured by it. For, in truth, David, and every king in his wars and victories, prefigured the passion and resurrection of Christ: and it is very easy to understand the thing prefiguring, and that which is prefigured, mutually. And perhaps this Psalm, in a general sense, speaks at the same time concerning both kings; as we have seen was the case in the preceding.

Christ the King, having conquered death, shall rejoice in thy strength by which thou hast raised him up and made him victorious; who, having died in the infirmity of the flesh, was made subject to all; or, as the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. xiii. 4, "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God." And that which is in the other part of the verse is the same, "And he shall greatly rejoice in thy salvation." That is, when he shall have been raised again from the dead.

*Ver. 2.—Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and in the will of his lips thou hast not defrauded him.*

This is a twofold description of prayer; the former of the heart, the latter of the mouth. Here the Psalmist acts the orator. What is the prayer of the mind but the desire of the heart; and what is the prayer of the mouth, but the will of the lips? But some have rendered it, instead of the "will" of the lips, the 'expression' or the 'utterance' of his lips: but this does not express the power of prayer so forcibly: for the expression of the lips may be so called, because something is signified as being requested. But our translator has rendered it by far the best, when he translates it the "will" or the desire of the lips: so that the lips may answer to the heart, and their "will" to its "desire." Whereby he would shew that vocal prayer

is not to be called prayer, unless the prayer be a desire, and proceed from the desires and affections of the heart. For the will of the lips is a lively and fervent prayer: for what is more lively than a will or a desire? I know not that the figure of expression here used by David is to be found any where else in the scriptures.

This order is indeed beautiful. It shews that the prayer of the heart is the first and main thing, without which the expression or utterance of the lips is a vain and useless murmur. And it also shews, that vocal prayer is not to be neglected; but that we are to take heed that it proceed from the prayer of the heart. "I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also," saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

By "thou hast not defrauded," we are to understand, thou hast not deprived, thou hast not removed: that is, thou hast taken care that he should not pray in vain: nor hast thou turned away his prayer so as not to hear it. So that, by this negative we have a most powerful affirmative.—But what is it that this heart has desired, and what is it that these lips have willed? This now follows.

Ver. 3.—*For thou hast prevented him with the blessings of sweetness; and thou hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.*

What the word "thou hast prevented" means I do not fully understand. As far as may be collected from the Hebrew, it is spoken in a comparative sense: that is, that Christ was so blessed that he was above all who are blessed, and that the blessings which were upon him were such as never were upon any others: according to that of Psalm xlv. 7, "Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And Paul, Rom. viii. 29, saith, "that he might be the first-born among many brethren." And 1 Cor. xv. 20, 'Now is Christ risen and become the first-fruits of them that slept.' And Psalm lxxxix. 6, "Who among the sons of God can be likened unto God?" And most certainly this preventing refers to the person of Christ. Though it may in a most beau-

tiful and most true expression be said that Christ was the first of all them that rose from the dead. So that this passage is one of those which predicted of the resurrection of Christ: so that it refers not only to the dignity of his person, but also to the time of his preventing or being before all others: for Paul does not call Christ "the first-fruits of them that slept," with respect to the dignity of his person only, but in reference to the time of his rising also.

Let the meaning be, therefore, "Thou hast prevented him:" that is, thou hast made him first in all those blessings. And this the former part of the verse shews and confirms, where it declares, that this king was crowned, whereby it explains, as it were, what this preventing was.

For, as I have said, the prophet begins in this verse to recite those things which the heart of this king desired, and what the will of his lips requested:—namely, salvation from death and strength in infirmity: which, are the best of all blessings. For we must here observe the Hebrew idiom:—that "the blessings of goodness" in the Hebrew is the same expression, as if we should say in Latin 'good, or, the best of blessings.'

And these "blessings" are a Hebrew idiom also, and are the same as what we call 'benefits.' As we have it by Jacob, Gen. xlix. 25, "The blessings of the breasts and of the womb." And 1 Sam. xxv. 27, 'Receive this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought.' All which things proceed from the blessing of God: as we have it described, Gen. i. The prophet therefore makes a distinction between these blessings of Christ and all other blessings, when he calls them טוב: that is, 'good' and 'sweet,' for blessings are not expressed with this epithet in any other place. Herein, therefore, David makes it manifest that he is speaking of future blessings, in which there is no sorrow, no bitterness. But all the things that we possess in this life, how good soever they may be, we cannot enjoy without evil; for 'the days are evil:' and "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," saith Christ: and this he said to his disciples when he foretold them that in the world they should have tribulation;

and that they would not enjoy even the all-sweet grace of God without labour and trouble. By which word of his, Christ has before-hand prevented any one from understanding this golden crown of Christ to signify a temporal crown, and thus making this king like unto all other kings: whereas these things that are spoken of him refer only to good things; that is, to future and spiritual things.

Indeed the very circumstances themselves, the consequence, and the power and force of the expression, wrest all idea of an allegory from our hands. So that by this putting of the crown of pure gold upon his head, is to be understood as signifying nothing else than that this person here spoken of was constituted king in sacred, spiritual, and the highest and best of things. And this kind of circumlocution is very general in the scriptures: as we have it, Judges v. 10, 'Ye that ride on white asses:' that is, ye nobles and chiefs. And again, 'Ye that sit upon the seats of judgment:' that is, ye judges. And again, 'Ye that walk in the way;' that is, ye vulgar and commonalty, &c.—For what great work of God, and what magnificence would there be, that needed to be described in this grand and powerful language, if, after this king had rejoiced in the power of salvation, not of men but of God, and then, was prevented, by the best of blessings, gifted with length of days, and blessed for ever,—what majesty of God would appear, I say, if, after all this description of the person here set forth, he should now descend into such mean things, and be described as delighting in a corruptible crown of gold! especially when men who are the most wicked and impious possess on every side of us a crown of this kind, procured by their own power, arrogance, and pride. And such as these are not worthy of being made to rejoice in the power and salvation of God, and in the light of his countenance, but of being confounded in his wrath, and of being hurled into the consuming fire: as we have it described in some of the following parts of the Psalm. Wherefore the majesty both of the person crowning, and of the person crowned, and all the attend-

ing circumstances, ought to bring us to an assurance, that the crown of gold here spoken of is a crown of unusual majesty, and never given to any other king than the one here spoken of.

Ver. 4.—*He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him length of days, even for ever and ever.*

I think the prophet appears to be mentioning the particular blessings before spoken of in their order, and explaining what he meant by the crown of pure gold. For he particularizes life, glory, dominion, priesthood, &c. as these blessings, and all these eternal: and then, he prays for victory and eternal vengeance upon his enemies: and when we have considered these things, it will appear manifest what the heart of this king desired, and what the will of his lips requested: namely, these eternal blessings! The first blessing that he desires is that he might be delivered from death. And this was so answered, that God not only raised him up but gave him life, even length of days, for ever and ever: that is, an eternal life. And hence it is that we come to an understanding that the Psalm speaks of Christ, because the person here spoken of is asking life, and it is said that an eternal life was given him. And this petition is the prayer of one that is about to die, when he asks life; and that Christ did this the Apostle tells us, Heb. v. 7. And the Apostle saith, ‘that he was heard in that he feared:’ for the person who has life cannot have life given him, as it is here prayed for. And indeed the prophet explains himself when he says that life was asked, and that a long life was given, even length of days for ever and ever, without an end or termination.

These two distinctive words OLAM and ED have been translated variously; but they seem to me to mean eternity.—Concerning OLAM, indeed, we have shewn above that it signifies an uncertain time; by which very uncertainty of time we understand eternity; even as by the name Melchizedeck, which has neither beginning nor end, the eternal priesthood of Christ is signified, as we are shewn by Paul, Heb. vii. 1, 2, 3.—And he that will may



refer the one word OLAM to the dominion of Christ in the church: and the other word ED to the church triumphant.

And observe this also to be implied in these words:—that more is given us than we ask of God. This the prophet wishes to shew when he expresses the asking of life in such simple and moderate words, and then directly afterwards uses such majestic words as “length of days” to express the life that was given. And so it is, that our petitions always fall short of the gifts which we receive from God: as the Apostle teaches us, Ephes. iii.

*Ver. 5.—There is great glory in thy salvation, putting glory and great comeliness upon him.*

There is a great variety and difference in the different interpretations of these Hebrew expressions HOD VE HADAR. In this passage we have it rendered “glory and great comeliness:” in Psalm xlv. 3, “thy glory and thy majesty:” in Psalm xcvi. 6, “strength and beauty:” in Psalm civ. 1, “honour and majesty:” and Psalm cx. 3, “in the beauties of holiness.” I in the mean time render it “praise and splendour.” For we call splendour a kingly equipage, and an abundance in all things: as we have it said of Dives in the Gospel by St. Luke, ‘that he fared sumptuously every day.’ And the splendour and regal magnificence of Christ is, that in his kingdom he has many, and great, and most noble princes and people highly adorned with all wisdom, truth, and all other spiritual gifts, while he himself is the most splendid and most adorned of them all: and to all these there is a most abundant plenty of all things, and yet, all attended with comeliness and reverence, such as the Apostle praises the Corinthians as being, when he says that they are enriched in all things. And the praise of Christ is, that he is honoured by all these, and all confess and give thanks unto him, because it is by his free gift that they have all these things.

The sense of the passage is, therefore, the King Christ, who was of all men the most despised in his death, and the most contemned of all, deserted by all, has, in thy

salvation, or by thy delivering of him from death, received, instead of all this ignominy, solitude, contempt, the highest glory, because thou puttest him in praise and splendour: as we have it, Prov. xiv. 28, "In the multitude of people is the king's honour:" where the same word HADAR is translated "dignity" or 'honour:' as we have it also, Prov. xx. 29, "The glory of young men is their strength, and the honour of old men is their grey head." Therefore the meaning of the words will be, that this person here spoken of was made renowned, a Prince, and a King of glory: which we cannot easily understand of David, who was continually encompassed with so many evils. Wherefore it must be understood of Christ glorified, preached, believed on, and adored!

Ver. 6.—*For thou wilt make him most blessed for ever: thou wilt make him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*

We have heard already that this King is glorious, now we hear that he is a Priest saving and eternal. Some think that Christ was blessed for ever, because he is blessed by all for ever. In which way the children of Israel are spoken of frequently by the prophets. And, Gen. xii. 2, it is said unto Abraham, "And thou shalt be a blessing:" (for so the Hebrew has it;) and thus our translator renders, 'And thou shalt be blessed.' And Isaiah xix. 24, 'And Israel shall be a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord hath blessed.' And again, Isaiah lxxv. 8, "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all:" in which passage, as well as in many others, this "blessing" is used in a passive sense.

The Hebrew of the passage is, literally, thus, 'For thou shalt make him blessednesses for ever,' in the plural number: which, although it may be received passively, as signifying that this King should be blessed by many, and should be loaded with many blessings from the Lord, yet, I think that it should be understood actively: according to that of Gen. xxii. 18, "And in thy seed

shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." For, as to those blessings with which Christ was blessed of God in his person, they have been abundantly spoken of by the Psalmist in the preceding Psalm, where David says, "For thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness."

Wherefore, I understand these "blessings" here to be eternal and heavenly: that is, those with which Christ as an eternal Priest blesses his people when they receive the Spirit: as the Apostle saith, Ephes. i. 3, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." It is the office of a priest to bless with that kind of blessing by which good things are conferred. But, as to that general blessing by which we praise those who have good things and wish them happiness, that is common to all, even the lowest of persons. And, in a word, the former is among the highest kind of blessings, the latter among the lowest.

And, this is our glorying and our boasting,—that we have a Bishop by whom all those curses with which we were cursed in Adam, are exchanged, done away with, and absorbed. So that no curse, whether it be of sin, or of men that curse us, can do us any harm; nay, through the abundance of that eternal blessing in Christ, it is made to work together for our good. Certainly, therefore, this is a most sweet word unto all who believe in Christ,—that they have an High Priest peculiarly their own, who blesseth them in all things.

"Thou wilt make him glad with the light of thy countenance." This can only be understood as signifying that blessing which the revealed glory of the majesty of God brings with it. For the countenance of God is joy, and joy is in the revealed glory of God.

*Ver. 7.—For the king trusteth in the Lord, and on the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.*

All the above-mentioned blessings will come on him, because he hoped and was not moved. And here we have a beautiful and appropriate description of hope, or

rather, a definition of it; which is powerful enough to confute all those impious opinions that have been delivered concerning hope. For, to hope in the Lord, is the same as not to be moved from the mercy of the most High, but to stand fast in it, and to expect every thing from it. Indeed, it is an easy thing to rejoice and delight in the mercy of God when it is present with us, but, not to be moved away into despair when that mercy is hidden, and when evils press upon us and move and drive us on every side,—that is hope indeed: and, to believe in such a state, and not fear and expect the contrary, is a hard and difficult matter: concerning which we have much said, Psalm v.

Wherefore, let them take heed what they do, who teach that hope proceeds from merits. Hope, as we are here taught, has respect unto the mercy of God, just as fear has respect unto his wrath and judgment. For, the man that hopes in the mercy of God is not moved; but he that fears has no rest, but flees from the wrath of God. If, then, Christ the most pure and innocent of all beings is said to have hoped in the Lord, and not to have been moved in the mercy of God, who are we, who dare to attempt to overcome by our own powers, and endeavours, and not rather by the mercy of God only! These things are written for our learning. The eyes and minds, therefore, of those who are under fears, are to be turned away from the judgment and wrath of God, and directed to his mercy. On the other hand, the minds of the hardened and brazen-browed are to be turned away from the mercy of God to his judgment.

*Ver. 8.—Let thine hand be found out by all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out all that hate thee.*

David now goes on to describe the victories of this King over his enemies. Our translator, with his accustomed variety, has made this active verb passive, ‘Let thine hand be found:’ for the expressions here are a repetition; as we have it, Psalm ii. 4, “He that sitteth

in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.”—And David here rather calls all these enemies the haters of God, than of Christ; and for that reason which I have before mentioned,—that we might know that God fights and takes vengeance for us: as he saith, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.” And Psalm cx. 1, “Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” And concerning the hand of God we have spoken abundantly, Psalm xvii. at that passage, “From the men which are thy hand,” ver. 12: wherein are implied power and the work of vengeance. Here, therefore, David is speaking of the Jews who killed Christ; who rose up against God and against his Christ, and who still persevere in the same impiety.

But what is the meaning of David’s expression here? Had the hand of God lost them, that it should be necessary to say that his right hand should find them out? No! But by this figure are beautifully set forth the presumption and security of the enemies of God, who act and go on as securely and confidently as if they were not within reach of the power of God. Nay, from their self-righteous zeal, they promise to themselves not only impunity, but also a reward; thinking that they do a signal service unto God; so that they do not in the least suspect the hand of God finding them out, nor think of any such thing, but imagine that they have built their nest safely in the bosom of God.

Ver. 9.—*Thou shalt put them into an oven of fire in the time of thy countenance: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*

The prophet here beautifully sets the circumstances themselves before our eyes: for this is exactly how it is with the wicked when the hand of God finds them out on a sudden, and visits them: for then they are taken, and find themselves in the midst of their straits, so that they would, if they could, flee from the sight of his wrath, or from this revelation of a just and angry God; but they cannot flee from it; and therefore, they call like them in Hosea x. 8, ‘Ye mountains, fall on us, and

ye hills, cover us." But all is in vain ; for they are compelled to endure that day and that revelation of eternal wrath ; and then there begins fear, trembling, flight, and intolerable horror, which makes them to burn in that unspeakable eternal fire. All external fire is nothing when compared with this eternal fire : and therefore, David very appropriately describes them as being made like unto an oven of fire ; or, as we say in Latin, a fiery oven ; which has not only fire all around it, but scorches and burns within. And thus Abraham, Gen. xix. saw Sodom and Gomorrah burning, and the smoke of them going up as from a furnace.

And this mighty and intolerable punishment God brings on men by his "countenance" only : that is, by the revelation of his wrath ; as David here says, "Thou shalt make them like unto a fiery oven in the time of thy countenance." And 2 Thess. i. 9, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And Psalm xxxiv. 16, "But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." In a word, this is that punishment which none can understand, nor have any idea of, but the damned who feel it : so that it is even awful to meditate upon the words of this verse, so appropriately and descriptively does David set the whole forth.—This oven is set on fire by the intolerable sight of God only, and is to burn to all eternity. For the day of judgment will not endure for a moment only, but will remain for ever : it will never set : the wicked will be judged for ever and ever, and will be tormented for ever and ever, and the oven will burn for ever and ever : that is, the wicked will be tormented inwardly with the extreme of all straits and tribulation.

Not, however, that the ungodly see God or his countenance in the same way as the godly shall see it : they will only feel the power of his presence, which they will not be able to endure, and yet will be forced to endure : even as now we may see in the judgments of this day. But the righteous man has a confidence like the boldness of a lion, expecting and waiting for the truth

to be revealed ; which truth the ungodly man dreads and thinks of with the utmost horror. Therefore, that great day will be sweet to the saints, but horrible to the ungodly.

“The Lord shall trouble in his wrath.” This is the same thing as was spoken of before, and is, as it were, an explanation of the oven ; because his anger shall be revealed ; and it is by that countenance of his, as I said, wherewith he burns them as with a fiery oven. The Hebrew would have it, ‘He shall swallow them up in his wrath.’ Because, he lays hold of them so that they can in no way escape. For he will not only bite them but will devour them wholly, so that no one of them shall be able to escape, in any part or in any way. And there is a peculiar force and emphasis in this word also ‘being *devoured* or *swallowed up* by the wrath of God :’ and all this has reference to the internal punishment.—And now there follows another part of the verse.

“And the fire shall devour them.” The Hebrew has it ‘shall eat them up.’ This is now to be understood of the external fire into which they will be sent with the devil and his angels, Matt. xxv. 41, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels :” and thus shall they be burnt both internally and externally, both in body and soul. But who was it that revealed all these things so clearly to this prophet ? for no one before him ever described hell so fully and exactly. Doubtless he had the first part of it by experience, and the latter by revelation. Thus, those that will enjoy in this life the cool garden and pleasant rest, shall have the burning oven and the fire in the next.

Ver. 10.—*Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*

And this verse compels us to understand this Psalm concerning Christ and his enemies, in which sense we see it in all things fulfilled. We may understand by “their fruit,” or their offspring, whatever they possessed in this life, (which is often called the fruit or labour of their hands,) and also, together with this, all the works

that they did, labouring in the law of God. For they, and all that they had, were destroyed by the Romans and dispersed throughout the whole world. Nor is this all: for even their "seed" and their posterity are not only driven from their land, but are cast out and rejected of all men: that the words of Hosea might be fulfilled, "The Lord my God shall cast them off, because they have not hearkened unto him, and they shall wander among the nations." And according to Micah vii. 17, "They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth." For wherever there are men, if there be any Jews among them, they have no certain dwelling-place; and even if they do not at the time actually wander about bodily, yet they are under the perpetual fear of wandering and being driven from the place where they are.

Ver. 11.—*They have inclined evils against thee: they have imagined counsels, which they could not establish.*

The Hebrew here is, 'For they have inclined evil upon thee; they have imagined an imagination; they could not.' Here the pronoun "*which*" is not in the Hebrew, but supplied by the translator to avoid the idiom of the Hebrew; and the verb establish, is added also to make out the sense more clearly: but the verb 'they could not,' which stands thus alone in the Hebrew, is the most powerful and forcible expression. 'They could not:' that is, they could effect nothing, or, they were impotent: in the same way as we have it, Psalm xiv. 1, "They shall hear my words, for they can:" that is, for they are strong and powerful.—And these evils and these imaginations are they which the popes have imagined to destroy Christ, imagining and meditating vain things: as we have it said of them, Psalm ii. for they say, "Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." And as it is said, Jeremiah xi. 19, "They devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living."



And it is very appropriate where he saith 'they have inclined,' whereby is signified more their attempt than their real acts or work; and this he farther explains in the following word 'They could not.' Thus hath the Lord set bounds to the sea that its waves may be broken on the shore, as we have it in Job. And so also hath he set bounds to the wicked, that they attempt, but yet cannot do any evil: as we have it, Isaiah xli. 23, "Do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed and behold it together."

Ver. 12.—*Therefore shalt thou put them back, in thy remnants thou shalt prepare their face.*

I, with Hieronymus, would here rather understand 'bow-strings' for "remnants:" and to this acception of the expression, I am led by the verb "shalt prepare" or 'shalt strengthen' 'against their countenance, or face.' For here there seems to me to be intended the twofold punishment of the impious Jews. The one of which is, that they are put back, or, to the back; that is, to flight; as we have it, Gen. xlix. 8, "Thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies." The other is, that greater evil which is opposed to them as they flee and turn their faces for flight,—that is, that the Lord directs or pulls his bow-strings: so that they are punished both behind and before: their burdens compel them to flee, and the bow of God, which they meet with, forces them to go back: so they are taken in their straits: and they are so placed in the midst of these, that always, while they attempt to avoid Scylla they run down into Charybdis.

Therefore, this "back" and this "face," set in opposition to each other, seem to me to mean nothing more or less than that these unhappy creatures, which way soever they turn to flee, only find themselves involved in the greater and greater evils,—their back is turned to flee, and then their face runs against the directed bow of God. And as examples of this, we have the Egyptians who were drowned in the Red Sea, whom the Lord turned to the back, that is, into flight, when he looked upon them and overturned them; and then when

they turned their faces to go back, the waters met them and came upon them, and thus they were overwhelmed in the midst of the waves. And also we have another example, Joshua viii. in the people of Ai, who, as they fled back into the city, were met by the children of Israel in their faces, and were destroyed unto utter destruction. And so, Judges xx. the same thing happened to the children of Benjamin. And who knows but that the prophet had his eye upon these examples, when he published forth this verse.

For we see that this always happens unto the Jews, —that they never fall more awfully than when they attempt any thing in their own strength: even as Moses also foretold them saying, “And thou shalt do nothing prosperously.” By which he signifies that they shall attempt many things for their safety, and shall by that means only perish the more. And so, also, at this day, they omit nothing in attempting to ensure their safety; and yet, they only by that means involve themselves the more, and fulfil that which is set forth, Luke xvi. throughout the whole of which chapter their pertinacity is more fully described.

But where these things are fulfilled in a spiritual sense, they are still more terrible: that is, where these characters pant and labour to satisfy their consciences by their works and wisdom, and to deliver them from sin, death, and hell in the sight of God. Here, indeed, they are most miserably made to turn their backs, while they weary themselves with their many devoted endeavours, with their AVEN and AMAL, in order that they might save themselves thereby: whereas, by all this toil, they become nothing more than martyrs of the devil, and are ground down with a double destruction. For the bow and string of the divine justice will meet them, and will hurl them back unto all eternity: saying, “Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” And this double destruction David described before, Psalm xiv. thus, “destruction and misery are in their ways,” &c. Thus they are oppressed with many evils, and are always turned back. And these unhappy wretches, with all

their good deeds, will run upon the bow and strings which are set and directed against their faces, which way soever they turn themselves.

This is my opinion and understanding of the verse, and this seems to me to accord with the general sense of the Psalm: for after David had said that they were to be destroyed by the sons of men, and to be loaded and oppressed under every kind of evil as their desert, because they imagined and planned evil against Christ, which devices they could not accomplish, it now rightly follows, that they were turned back, and that the bow of God was directed against them. Because, they do not even now cease to imagine evil against him, as they first began: but the more evil they imagine, the more they are involved and oppressed: still desiring nothing else but that Christ may be destroyed out of the way, and that they might be preserved. And hence, the judgment of God ceases not to meet them, and God ceaseth not to direct his bow against their faces and these their devices. So that they are always attempting many things, yet always in vain: nay, the more they labour, the more they work their own destruction. Concerning this we have it thus written, Hosea v. 12—15, “Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and unto the house of Judah as rottenness. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion unto the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.” And so again, Psalm viii. David foretold that the enemy and avenger should be destroyed. And what do these hardened people seek to do this day but to take vengeance upon Christ? And yet none of their devices prosper. They feel the burden on their backs, and they feel they are resisted in their faces;

and yet, after all, they will not be wise, for the Lord hath decreed that they should be thus.

Ver. 13.—*Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.*

This is said in favour of Christ against the Jews; and David here closes his Psalm with a beautiful exhibition of the divine power. As if he had said, They would have thee overwhelmed in infirmity and impotence, that they may be exalted in their own power; and they would have thy kingdom and thy power to be humbled under every kind of degradation and blasphemy; but all is in vain and most impious; for here is the great and summary point, Thou shalt be exalted in thine own power, and shalt be glorified in the power of thy kingdom: and this is what we desire, and that in which we glory. Let them howl, but we will sing: let them wail and gnash with their teeth, but we will dance and sing. The desire of the wicked shall perish, but thy power and thy kingdom shall stand: for “Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations,” Psalm cxlv. 13.

Among the many nouns of the Hebrew language which are used to signify ‘power’ and ‘strength,’ the two that are used in this verse appear to me very remarkable, OZ and GIBURA.

The former of these, oz, signifies properly that might or natural strength with which any thing is powerful in its kind; and this the Greek translators often render by *δυναμις*, but not always so; the Latin also varies in the word by which it renders the original. The power or strength meant is, that which we mean when we are speaking of the power or strength of any jewels, or metals, or herbs, or any such things. Thus it is said, Psalm xlvi. 1, “God is our refuge and strength.” And Paul, 1 Cor. i. 18, calls Christ “the power of God.” And Rom. i. 16, he says, that the Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation.” And Daniel viii. 23, says of ANTICHRIST, “A king shall stand up powerful in faces:”

that is, whose whole strength and ability (as we say) shall stand in faces; and not in arms or in words: that is, in appearance, in external pomp, conversation and superstition: which Hieronymus renders ‘A king impudent in face.’

Hence it is manifest, that the power of God in this place, whereby he is powerful in his saints in the Spirit: by which power it is that the saints do all that they do and effect: because, this power is, as it were, their natural power, and is a power begotten in them by the word of God: even as heat is natural to fire, weight to stone, &c. As we have it said, 2 Cor. xiii. 3, “Which to you-ward is not weak but mighty in you.” And Ephes iii. 20, “Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” “Unto him:” that is, who has this power and this strength: or, to whom it belongeth to do more than either we can ask or think. For Paul is here commending the will, but not the nature of the ability of God, when he says, “Unto him who is able:” and hence this verb ‘to be able,’ does not exactly agree with the Hebrew word which we here find: because it refers to contingency and will, more than unto native power, as the Greeks often use their *εξουσια*. And when we render it ‘fortitude,’ we are still farther from the mark: as we have it, Psalm xxiv. 8, “The Lord strong and mighty: the Lord powerful in battle:” for ‘fortitude’ signifies and implies some effort of a daring mind beyond this natural might here spoken of.

This strength, moreover, signifies that latent and genuine innate power, which, as it were, of its own accord, does and effects all things which agree with its nature. So that the strength or might of God, signifies, all that which we are, and can do, by his gift and presence with us. Thus, the blessed virgin saith, “For he that is mighty hath magnified me:” that is, he that administers to all the power that they have.

And now, the other word *GIBURA* is what the Greeks sometimes, and not badly, render by *δυνασια*, and the Latins by *potentia*: as in the preceding Psalm, “The salv-

ation of his right hand is in powers." And in Psalm cl. "Praise him in the firmament of his power," &c.

Here we have, therefore, a most beautiful order. First, the Lord is exalted in his own strength, *oz*; and then his power, *GIBURA*, is sung of and praised: for the latter easily arises out of, and is increased by, the former, and is also preserved by it. But, on the contrary, there can be no *GIBURA* where there is no *oz*. And so, Psalm xxiv. 8, we have it first "the Lord is mighty;" and then "the Lord is powerful in battle."

## PSALM XXII.

TO VICTORY: TO THE MORNING HIND:

A PSALM OF DAVID.

The LXX. have translated the title of this Psalm thus, 'To the end: for the morning undertaking: a Psalm of David.' But for what reason, or in what way, they made 'undertaking' or 'assumption' out of "hind" I cannot comprehend. Most certainly the Hebrew has 'The hind of the morning,' in the feminine gender, though Hieronymus has rendered it 'The morning stag,' in the masculine. But it may be perhaps that the LXX. with their explicit way of translating, wished to give us plainly in their translation that which David secretly intended by the expression. For Christ, indeed, in his passion, which is sung of in this Psalm, most certainly took upon him and bore the sins of all. And this 'undertaking' or 'assumption' was a morning undertaking; that is, it was the first of all such undertakings; which, in their degree, all the saints do also, bearing one another's burdens. But this rendering of the LXX. was too much laboured and far-fetched, and beyond what they could defend as a translation, seeing that we have the Hebrew.

It is well known that the Hebrew preposition *AL* is rendered in Greek by *εις* or *επι*, and in Latin by *ad*, *in*, or

*super.* And therefore, we may rightly render it here in the prophetic manner, 'To victory: to the hind of the morning:' as Peter has it, Acts ii. 25. For David speaketh to (or concerning) him: and therefore it may not at all improperly be rendered 'Concerning the hind;' or, as before, 'To the hind:' for all things are said 'to' (or with reference to) him; and all things belong to him which are said in this Psalm, and which he was to come and to accomplish and fulfil.

Without doubt he calls Christ in his sufferings this "hind:" because he was taken by the Jews in the day of his flesh, and delivered up to the gentiles to be torn in pieces: just as a stag when taken by the dogs is delivered up to the huntsmen to be killed and slaughtered. This, I say, I conceive to be the reason why Christ is styled "the hind" in the present title: and the whole Psalm seems to favour this acceptation: especially where it says, ver. 16, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me."

And the Hebrew has "hind" rather than 'stag' most appropriately: thereby signifying, that Christ underwent his sufferings when his apostles and disciples, like so many tender roes, were now gathered together; whereby he preached to them, fed them, and saved them: concerning which we have it said, Prov. v. 19, "The hind is loving and the roe pleasant: let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love." And what is this "hind" of lovers, (for so it is in the Hebrew) but Christ who is most loving and lovely to *his*? And who are these roes of grace and favour but his disciples? And the "breasts" of this hind are the words of eternal life with which he feeds and intoxicates all his followers: and with which Solomon commands us to be ravished at all times: for if this were the case with us, that whole and strange woman, that adulterous synagogue, whose throat is shining with oil, and whose lips drop with honey, would not seduce any after her unto death. And I understand the whole of that chapter, Prov. v. to have this meaning. Hence, David here beautifully comprehends the time,

the age, the desires of Christ suffering, in one word, "hind."

But what, I pray, are we to understand by "Of the morning," or "the morning hind?" The most celebrated of the fathers have here understood the raising up of Christ from the dead in the morning, which took place on the morning of a sabbath. Some, by morning here, understand the seizing of Christ, which also took place on a morning. Others, by 'morning hind,' understand the first and chiefest of all hinds; that is, the first and chiefest of all martyrs. And others have other thoughts upon it, but none of them please me. — Wherefore, I will meditate a little upon it. Almost all the prophets seem to me to delight in similitudes of the morning and rising sun, and to have seen many mysteries of God intimated by them: among which we have that remarkable passage, Gen. xxxii. where Jacob wrestled with a man until the morning, and was blessed by him: and 2 Sam. xxiii., and Psalm c. 4, and Paul, Rom. xiii. &c. Wherefore the night or evening signifies the time of the law, of sin, of death, and of the Old Testament, and the synagogue itself, in which the works of sin abounded by the law. But by morning, is signified the time of the Gospel, of grace, of life, of the New Testament. And hence, morning signifies the church or the new people of the Gospel.

Wherefore David has used "hind" as well as "morning" allegorically; that he might draw away the reader from the carnal to the spiritual hind, which is Christ. For why should he say the hind of the morning rather than a hind of any other time. And Christ indeed is the hind of the morning, because having suffered, he by his suffering overcame the law, destroyed sin, and conquered death, and made a new day and a new age to arise, in which began, grace, life, and salvation.

The meaning of the title is, therefore, that this Psalm was spoken of or concerning Christ, the author of the renovation of all things by his passion having overcome all old things: just as when the night is gone, the morn-



ing comes on and the day approaches. But about this transition, and this change of the night into day, and this evening into the morning, they know nothing unto this day, though they themselves fulfilled it before it was heard of. And, therefore it was that David signified this so obscurely, and prefigured, as it were, their blindness by the very obscurity of his title to the Psalm: which they should read, and yet not understand, unless by the operation of the Spirit the veil should be taken off their hearts. For such as the state of their hearts was, such were the scriptures that described them: for to the dark all things are dark; and are said and done in obscurity to them, but to the illuminated nothing is obscure. Hence, we understand this title very easily, which unto them we cannot make plain by any means that they should be illumined and understand it.—Now let us come to the Psalm itself.

Ver. 1.—*O God, my God, look upon me, why hast thou forsaken me? far from salvation are the words of my faults.*

Let no one doubt that the first verse of this Psalm is to be understood wholly of Christ: for he himself used it as a prayer upon the cross, when he cried out in the Hebrew, ELI ELI LAMA AZABTHANI: that is, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!’ Whence it is manifest that the pronoun “my” was omitted in the first place, and that, “look upon me” was added by them. And again, where they have rendered it, “Far from salvation are the words of my faults,” the Hebrew has it, ‘the words of my roaring:’ and here I suppose they were led astray by the similarity of the words; because the same word without an *Aleph* in the middle signifies fault or ignorance: as we have it in the title of the 7th Psalm, and in Psalm xix. “Who can understand his errors!”

And that there is something of a singular force, meaning, and feeling in these words is manifest from this,—the Evangelists have studiously given us this verse in the very words of the Hebrew, in order to shew their

emphatic force. (And moreover I do not remember any one other place in the scriptures where we have this repetition, ELI, ELI.) For when others say that Christ's humanity was never left by, that is, was never separated from, his divinity, that is most rightly said: but for those who are less experienced in these things, it is necessary that these very sublime things should be set forth in plainer and more simple words. And indeed it is more obscure to say, that the humanity was deprived of the help of God, than to say, as the Hebrew here simply expresses it, that Christ was left of God. For who shall fully describe that help? Because, the inexperienced have no more knowledge of it than thinking, that God might by it perhaps have delivered Christ miraculously out of the hands of the Jews: but that has nothing whatever to do with this verse.

I find some also so morose and self-conceited, that the moment they have done, or heard, or arrived at any thing very difficult or abstruse, immediately bring it forth before all, that it might seem as if they brought forth something very wonderful, paying at the same time no respect or regard whatever either to the whole subject, to the hearers, or to places. The wisdom of such, therefore, as it is ill-timed and savours not of sobriety, offends many without cause, and brings no small reproach upon our word and ministry. Whereas, if such served Christ according to the measure of their gift only, they would find matter enough to teach usefully, and might be good and honourable stewards of the manifold grace of God. Such characters as these have made me begin to fear, and to dislike being engaged in meditations on those deep things which surpass all human capacity; and especially so if they are not necessary. We know indeed that the study of divine things is common to all: but on the other hand we also know, that some can receive milk only, and that others can digest solid food, and that the same grape of the truth can be administered and taken in different ways; all which ways should be managed and accommodated to the capacities of all, and that is not impossible to be done; and yet by these

means the receivers will not be deprived of any of the truth itself. Thus Paul also would not that those who are weak, and harassed about scruples in ceremonies, should be offended by any doctrines or examples of strong faith. But why do I dwell any longer upon these observations? Love has a long road made very short by the commandments; and she will instruct us how to use and do all things, upon all occasions.

And yet, that we may not let so rich a verse as this first pass, by entirely without some remarks, I will say a few words about this ‘being forsaken of God.’—This we cannot understand better than by shewing first, what God is! God then, is life, light, wisdom, truth, righteousness, goodness, power, joy, glory, peace, blessedness, and all good! And therefore to be left of God, is to be involved in death, darkness, ignorance, lies, sin, malice, weakness, sorrow, confusion, dismay, desperation, damnation, and all evil. What, then, follows from this? Shall we make Christ, ignorant, a liar, a sinner, a bad person, in despair, and damned? This, as I observed before, is to come to conclusions that produce something difficult and abstruse to make it appear a something wonderful, like the characters above-mentioned.

— But do thou consider things thus.—It is granted by all that in Christ there were at the same time the greatest joy and the greatest sorrow, the greatest weakness and the greatest power, the greatest glory and the greatest confusion; and so also there were the greatest peace and the greatest trouble; and again, the greatest life and the greatest death: and all this is sufficiently shewn by the present verse: where Christ says, that he was forsaken of God, and yet calls God *his* God. For no one can say “My God, my God,” who is wholly forsaken of God. If, therefore, some parts of God (if I may so speak) forsook Christ, why are not all parts and the whole of God said to have forsaken him? For, there would be nothing in the way of believing this but the general use and sense of men: because, it would not be in the least more absurd to say so, than to say to the gentiles, before they were brought to the faith, that the

same man at the same time lived with the greatest life, and died the greatest death.

What then shall we say here? Shall we not say that Christ at the same time was (as he stood in our stead) the most righteous person and the greatest sinner, of the greatest lies and the greatest truth, of the greatest glorying and the greatest desperation, the most truly blessed and the most utterly damned? For if we say not these things, I know not how he could be forsaken of God. For if in this same way many saints were left of God, such as Job, David, Hezekiah, Jacob, how much more shall it be said of Christ, the head of all the saints, that he was left of God, who carried and bore all our griefs in himself?

Here then my mind concludes thus.—Christ was, in truth, most righteous and ever remained so: “for he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” And it was for this that his will was, to be conceived and born of a virgin, that he might be without sin. Otherwise, how could he deliver us from sin? But at the time in which he suffered, he so took upon him and bore all our sins as if they were his own, and suffered for all those sins for which we must have suffered; for as Paul saith, from Psalm vi. “The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.” And again, Isaiah liii. 4, “Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,” “for the transgression of my people was he stricken,” “neither was any deceit found in his mouth.” And, as the striking of the Lord with which he strikes for sin is not only death, but also the dread and horror of a distressed conscience, which feels eternal wrath, and feels as if it were utterly forsaken to all eternity and cast off from the face of God, (as David confesses, Psalm xxxi. 22, “I said in my excess, I am cut off from before thine eyes;”)—as this is the case, I say, it of necessity and evidently follows, that Christ himself suffered the dread and horror of a distressed conscience that tasted eternal wrath. For the Apostle saith, Hebrews iv. 15, that he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. And again, he says, chap. ii. 17, Wherefore, it behoved him to be

made in all things like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful High Priest.'

These same things also, the Apostle teaches, Gal. iv. 4, 5, "made under the law that he might redeem them that were under the law." And again, chap. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And he was not made under the ceremonial law only, if he had he would have redeemed the Jews only, and not the gentiles, who were not under that law. Nor was he so under the law of the Ten Commandments as to fulfil it, but that he might suffer also all those things which those who are under the law suffer. For to be under the law spiritually in all its power, is to be killed and damned, or to be in death and hell: that is, to be under the feeling sense of death and hell, which state raises in a person the greatest hatred and blasphemy against the law. Hence, to be cursed, is not being cursed before and in the estimation of men only. For Paul in the same place shews that Moses said in a general way even of Christ himself, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Such an one, therefore, who is thus accursed feels that he is accursed of God: under which feeling, he utters that of Psalm iii. 2, "Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in his God." For the words of a man thus accursed, complain that he feels his soul to be penetrated by the curse: which is never the case, but where the soul feels the wrath and curse of God. And what evil is there that the conscience thus alarmed does not forbode unto itself? What absurdity then is there in ascribing unto Christ a trembling and fearful conscience for a time, and thereby shewing that he, though innocent, endured our misery for a time.

Thus we are punished and tortured with this same punishment, but with this difference, that we have the additional feeling that the sin and cause of it are our own. To shew this the more plainly, therefore, we would set it forth thus.—Sin has a twofold feature or state in us: for while it is in the act it is not felt: and this is the worst part of sin,—namely the forgetfulness and con-

tempt of God. And here the law for a time remains still and quiet, and the sin is dead. But when the law comes it revives, the conscience is stung, and there is no peace in our bones from the sight and sense of our folly. This is the knowledge of sin by the law, and the revelation of the spirituality of the law. And this the condemned have; and this is death, and going down into hell. And this sin it was that Christ suffered, and not that former kind of sin: concerning which Paul saith, 2 Cor. v. 21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us (here is the conscience made to feel the latter kind of sin, and take it and bear it for us) who knew no sin," (here is the conscience free from the former sin.)

But even in this also Christ differs from us: for we being under the greater condemnation, so bear the wrath of sin and the law, that we go on sinning still, because we are infected with that former sin, from our depraved desire; because we judge what we suffer to be hard, evil, and unjust; and we go on sinning in ignorance as under any common course of sin; that is, we do not feel it, nor see how evilly we act by this our judgment. But Christ being infected with no sin nor depraved selfish desire, did not complain, nor fight against, that which he suffered, but all his complaints were those of a pure, and most sensibly tender nature. And to set this forth with a plain and coarse example, it was in the same way as this — We dread the cold of the flesh and all other unpleasant inconveniencies of the senses, not because they are disagreeable to nature, but because they stand in the way of our pleasures and vicious indulgences. But Christ shuddered at all these objects, without any evil affliction from the feelings of uncorrupt nature themselves. We cannot enjoy the greater kinds of delicacies without some vicious taint of innate evil gratification. But Christ could enjoy these same delicacies without any vicious taint of gratification, merely from the sweet enjoyment of an all-pure nature. And in all these things he was equally pure, and could have done and borne all these things, like Adam in paradise, without sin. And this state and nature of Christ is thus set forth in the

Epistle to the Hebrews; where it is called a being 'tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin.' And the examples I have given, and the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, will apply to Christ in all things. In him there was not sin once, which is in us in all things.

Hence we cannot bear this "My God, why hast thou forsaken me!" and all this wrath of the law without murmuring and blasphemy; on account of the secret vice and depravity of our nature, whereby we seek our own only. But Christ said and endured these same things without murmuring and blaspheming, and on this account:—that which is murmuring and blasphemy in us, may be things of the same kind in Christ, and yet not be murmuring or blasphemy. So that we may say, that the same things which were in Christ, if they should be exactly the same in us, would in us be murmuring and blasphemy, and yet not be so in him, but be, in him, only a certain motion of the infirmity of nature, in all things like unto that which is murmuring and blasphemy in us. For Christ could not sin nor do evil: though, if we did the same things that he did, they would be truly sins. Nor is this any thing wonderful; for, as I said, the works that he did, if they should be done by us, wou'd all be sins, even though they should in their kind be in all things alike. He ate, he slept, he walked, he waked, and did all things without sin. But if we were to do all these same things we should sin in them all: for he was a good tree, but we are an evil tree: and such as the person is, such are his works.

This expression, therefore, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me!" is like unto blasphemy against God, and yet it is not blasphemy. If, therefore, we should say that Christ was made the blasphemy of God, (as some render that of Deut. xxi. 23, translating it 'blasphemy,' concerning which Hieronymus has written much in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians,) we should say it in the same sense as he is said to be made a curse, and to be made sin; because he felt blasphemy, and the curse, and sin in himself, and yet was himself without

blasphemy, without the curse, and without sin: whereas all these things in us are real blasphemy, real curse, and real sin, in their very acts: thus, Christ was immersed in all our sins and evils: as it is said, Psalm lxix. and Rom. xv. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me."

But here this objection is started;—that, if all these things be true, Christ will appear not to have loved God with all his strength; and that, while he saith "Why hast thou forsaken me," he certainly opposes his will to the will of God; and that, he did the same in the garden, when he said, 'Not my will, but thine, be done; wherein, (as they say,) he manifestly indicated that he had a will contrary to that of God; and so strong a will, that he broke it by much force and even with bloody sweat, in order to subject it to the will of God. And, (add they,) if we did this, should not we be justly said to have sinned against God by the highest rebellion and disobedience?—But here again, this was a motion of the greatest and highest kind proceeding from an innocent and infirm nature: which motion we could not feel, on account of the depraved leaven and sin of self-love; and if we did feel it, rebellion and disobedience would immediately creep in through the leaven of this sin. A clean hand may touch clean linen and not pollute it, but an unclean hand cannot but pollute it. For "to the pure all things are pure, but to the impure nothing is pure."

Christ, therefore, loved his Father with all his strength: but his torments, as they were above his human strength, forced his innocent and infirm nature to sigh, groan, cry, dread, and shrink; in the same manner, as if you load a beam beyond its strength, it must from natural necessity, and not from any defect in itself, crack and give way. But we, even though we may suffer things beyond our strength, yet, as our strength is impure and corrupt, are not brought to love God with all our strength, even though made to suffer beyond our strength. For, do not the damned suffer beyond their strength? and yet, every cry that they send forth is blasphemy. But though Christ suffers that which is be-



yond his strength, yet that which he sends forth in cry is not blasphemy, but an innocent cry like unto that which is blasphemy in us.

But still, we do not by all these observations say that Christ did not suffer in a different way from us, and that he was not tortured and dismayed in soul differently from us, or different from what the damned feel in their dread of, and a fleeing from, God. For Christ even in his own eyes was like unto one forsaken, cursed, a sinner, a blasphemer, and one damned, though without sin. Because, it was not a matter of play, or jest, or hypocrisy, when he said, 'Thou hast forsaken me:' for he then felt himself really forsaken in all things, even as a sinner is forsaken after he has sinned: though he was not in reality left as a sinner, because he was like the sinner before the commission of his sin.—All that Christ suffered he suffered indeed: there was truth in it all: nor are we to lessen or make void the meaning and force of the words of God. And if there be any who do not comprehend these things, let them remain down in this plain, and let them permit the disciples to go up into the mountain to Christ. For the words of this Psalm are not spoken for all, for all have not the same gifts, nor are the sufferings of all alike. The scripture has in its various places milk for babes, and also wine and solid food for the strong. Therefore, as the weak have their consolations handed out to them by the scriptures, so also ought the strong meats to be thus administered to the strong.

I have dwelt a little at length upon these things, in order that I might commend unto you more highly the grace of faith and the mercy of God, and that you might have a more full knowledge of Christ. For by this verse those are instructed who are exercised in the depths of the abyss of death and hell, and they are here furnished with an antidote against despair. And again, those who are exercised in heavenly places, and set their nests among the stars, have a check furnished them against presumption. For if the wrath of the law, which is death and hell, seize and alarm any one, he may be sustained by this verse as by a faithful staff, remembering Christ

his Lord, who, being proved by the same temptations, learned to feel for and succour all those who are tempted and tried with the same; and who did not suffer these things for himself, but for our necessity willingly and knowingly, through his grace, endured all these evils, into which we were plunged ignorantly, by our birth. And indeed, those who are surrounded with the pains of death and hell, have not a readier or safer remedy, than remembering this victorious infirmity, and faith in it and prayer. Faith, I say, by which thou mayest believe that he suffered all these things for thee and thy necessities, that he might remedy all thy evils, and that thou, on this very account, mightest call upon him, that he might not have to say in the words of Isaiah xlix. 4, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought:" for how shall it not be said that he has laboured in vain, and has wrought all his works in vain, if we do not trust in them, and do not call upon him at all times in trouble. Let us then store up in our inmost souls the words of this verse, which have been so remarkably commended to our notice, by the Evangelists designedly giving them unto us in their Gospels in the original Hebrew,—let us store them up, I say, in our inmost souls against a time of need!

"Far from salvation are the words of my roaring." Suppose we understand the figure hypallage here, and that the words according to their right placing and sense stand thus: "Far from the words of my roaring is my salvation." The meaning of which is, Salvation does not hear: it does not come when I call, and at my roaring: it is so far off because thou hast forsaken me. And this is the sense that the following verse seems to require, where it is said in explanation, as it were, of this, "O my God, I cry in the day-time, and thou wilt not hear," &c. But the sense, without any figure, will be better understood, and more according with the general scope of the Psalm, thus,—that he who is forsaken of God is far from God, in whom alone is salvation: though God himself is never far from any one, being a God every where present. Christ, therefore, when God

forsook him, and his words also were far from the salvation which was in God, and which was all the time close to him. So that you may imagine that Christ's was a certain being forsaken of God that appeared to be very far off. For, to be left of God, is to go away in feeling far from life and salvation, into the distant region of death and hell; which no one can understand but he that feels it. For who can understand that it can be possible, that salvation should be most near unto us, and at the same time most distant from us. For if the salvation had not been near, he would not have said "My God:" and if it had not been far off, he would not have said, "hast forsaken me." We, therefore, are far from salvation while we thus suffer, though God all the while is near to help us. For that which is impossible and a matter of despair with us, is possible and a matter of facility with him; so that all the 'far off' is in the feelings of us only while we suffer; that is, in our infirmity; which is nothing else but the weak feeling of torture. But, as I said, we must leave all this to be understood by the weak and afflicted only. For as to what some of the fathers have said, that it is sometimes the divinity, and sometimes the humanity of Christ that is here speaking, and that it is the salvation of the people and not of Christ that is here to be understood,—all this, I say, amounts to nothing at all: for we are to believe that it is Christ the Man here speaking throughout the whole Psalm.

He does not say 'I am far from my salvation:' but 'the words of my roaring are far from salvation:' whereas, he did not say 'hast forsaken the words of my roaring,' but "hast forsaken me." And perhaps this is in order to correct and explain that which he had before said "hast forsaken me." For as God is ever near and not far off, as it is said by Jeremiah, he never leaves so as not still to be near and to hold the person still in his hand: as we have it, Psalm cxxxix. 8, 9, 10. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the

sea ; even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Hence, it is only the feelings and the words of the roaring that shew that he is far from God : that is, though God is most present, yet they feel it not. So we often seem as if we were far from God ; whereas, it is only our feelings, and our words and roaring, that are far off ; that is, we feel not as we wish, and as we pray we may feel. But, as I have before confessed, I entirely yield to the words of the Psalm ; nor can I fully understand them nor reach them in conception ; nor, if I could, would it be possible for me fully to express them.

But he says "far" rather than 'long:' because, the prophet is expressing here more the intenseness of the feeling, than the duration of the torment : knowing, that he was made but for a little time lower than the angels, that is, for three days, as we have it Psalm viii. and which is the meaning of the passage, ver. v. But then this twinkling of an eye, and this moment of desertion and being far off, is such an intolerable burden, that it forces Christ to cry and roar aloud : and hence it was, that David did not say the words of my cry, but the words of my roaring, thereby expressing that most bitter and unspeakable groaning of the spirit. And in this part of the verse David breathes forth that which we have before said,—that Christ was made sin for us : and that by God's forsaking him without any fault of his, he was made like unto the greatest of sinners ; in whom there was nothing less than the wrath of God assailing him, rushing in upon his conscience, and driving him to desperation.

Those who read it "the words of my faults," (in which way perhaps they may read it, seeing that the letter *Aleph* may be here accidental, as it is in many other places,) must understand it thus,—that he made our faults his own that he might make his righteousness ours, as Augustine saith. Thus the words of my faults will intimate that which we are now saying, that this was the prayer of a sinner. Excepting this, that we are to take heed that Christ be not called a sinner, even

though he confesses that the faults were his, and though they were truly made his.—And if any one wishes by “words” here to understand ‘matter’ or ‘business,’ after the Hebrew manner of expression, so that the words of the faults of Christ should signify the business, or matter, and deserts of the faults, I will not resist him: for the desert is ours as well as the faults, though the faults or sins were Christ’s but not the deserts: for Christ endured all the evils that were due to our sins, and made the faults of others his; as we have it, Isaiah xliii. 24, “Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, and thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.”

And this is that mystery which is rich in divine grace unto sinners: wherein, by a wonderful exchange, our sins are now no longer ours but Christ’s: and the righteousness of Christ is ours. He has imparted that unto us, that he might clothe us with it, and fill us with it: and he has taken our evils upon himself that he might deliver us from them. So that now, the righteousness of Christ is not only ours objectively (as they term it), but formally also; and so, our sins are not Christ’s objectively, but also formally. For in the same manner as he grieved and suffered in our sins and was confounded, in the same manner we rejoice and glory in his righteousness: and it is manifest that he did grieve and was confounded in them truly, as we here see; and so also we rejoice and glory truly in his righteousness.

I, therefore, though the LXX. only of all the translators agree with me, would rather render it “the words of my faults” than ‘the words of my roaring.’ For here we have the bridegroom and the bride made one flesh, which sacrament can never be sufficiently spoken of, proclaimed, heard, thought of, or understood, on account of the greatness, of the riches, of the glory contained in it; and which are wholly hidden from all the men of this world, even from the prudent and the wise, and are revealed unto none but babes; whose whole, only, and continual work it is to remember him in whom they live, rejoice, and glory; and in comparison of whom all the righteousness of the law most vilely sinks into

nought, and is nothing but dung and dross ; even though it should arrive to such a perfection as to be blameless : as Paul says, Philip. iii.

Ver. 2.—*O my God, I shall cry daily unto thee, and thou wilt not hear me : and in the night, and not unto my ignorance.*

Here I shall omit the many opinions of various interpreters and of the fathers, and come directly to the Hebrew, which says, “ And in the night, and not silence to me.” And this, Hieronymus, being carried away by Aquila the Jew, uses a great and unhappy abundance of words to drag to this signification,—that God was not silent to Christ, but heard him : thus making the sense of the latter part of the verse to be contrary to the former : as if God did not hear him in the day, but did hear him in the night. Whereas, this silence refers to Christ ; and the meaning is, that he cried day and night and was heard in neither time. What he means to say, therefore, is this,—“ There is no silence to me :” that is, there is no one to hear me, to console me, and to cause that my crying and roaring should cease and be silent ; but I am compelled to cry day and night unceasingly unto thee as unto one inexorable and implacable. Thou dost not hear me, and I do not cease to cry : so that the verse is a repetition, the one part of the other.

But this inquiry remains to be answered, how Christ can be understood to have cried day and night, when he only thus cried once upon the cross about the ninth hour ? For I do not admit that any part of this Psalm was spoken by Christ in the person of his members ; (which many of the fathers concluded,) but I hold it, that all things here said agree in the one person of Christ.—We may here say, therefore, that as the future indicative is often used in the Hebrew for the optative, it is here used for the optative, and describes emphatically the feelings of one forsaken ; in this manner—‘ Thou so forsakest me, and the words of my roaring are so far from salvation, that, even if I should cry day and night, or could cry day and night, I should still cry in vain,

because thou wouldst not hear me, nor would there be silence to me; but I must die and descend into hell:’ wherein again he confesses that he feels eternal wrath.

Ver. 3.—*But thou dwellest in holiness, the praise of Israel.*

The Hebrew is verbatim thus, ‘And thou holy, the inhabiter, the praises of Israel:’ where the conjunction *and*, must be inserted to facilitate the Hebrew idiom in the second part of the verse: in this manner: ‘The inhabiter and the praises of Israel:’ for it is in the plural number TEHILLOTH, praises, or hymns, or songs, or verses.

Here we have God set forth under three appellations, ‘Thou art holy,’ and ‘The inhabiter,’ and ‘The praises of Israel.’ But what will be the meaning of all this? I think that it is said by way of contention, in this way.—I am forsaken and am made afar off, I am given into the hands of sinners, and am subjected unto all evils: as we have it below, “I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people:” but thou art holy, and to be revered, and inaccessible; who hast set thy dwelling most high, that no evil can come nigh thee.

For, as I have before shewn, this is what is called holy in the scriptures,—that which is separate; and that from which all abstain with fear and reverence, and do not rashly approach. As it was said to Moses at the bush, Exod. iii. 5, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” And again, 1 Sam. vi. 20, “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?” And Joshua xxiv. 19, “Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God.” In the Hebrew KI ELOHIM KIDOSCHIM in the plural number. Therefore, these things are most distinctly different and contrary to each other,—to be holy, and a worm; to be separate, and no man; to be inaccessible, and the reproach of men and despised of the people: and all this is an exaggeration of the sorrow.

And like unto this is the appellation “the inhabiter:” that is, such an one who sits in security, in quietness, and

peace ; while the sufferer, on the other hand, is forsaken, and in the depth of perturbation through fear, flight, and disquietude, having no one place wherein to be at rest ; as it is here said, ‘There is no silence to me ;’ for there was no rest in his bones. Because, the greatest conflict of all this temptation are the straits in which the soul is bound, and which can be known by none but those who experience it. And thus, Hezekiah experiencing the same, saith, Isaiah xxxviii. 11, “I said, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living : I shall see man no more with the inhabiter of rest.”

And he calls God “the praises of Israel,” because, as we said, and as it will be made manifest in the following verses, God so dealt with the people of Israel, that he always delivered them in this life. And this passage seems to be derived from that of Moses, Exod. xv. 2, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation.” But he so forsook Christ here that he fell down into death in which there is no remembrance of God, and into hell where no one confesses and praises him : and thus Hezekiah, whom we have before adduced, says, “For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee.”

Here, therefore, we see that Christ suffered all the punishment properly due to sin, and tasted death and hell. For, from what cause or necessity did he call God “the praises of Israel ?” but because, being under the most present feeling of hell, he feared that he should not be like unto the praising Israel, and should not be able to say, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation.” For those who suffer these straits are involved in the deepest distress and concern, lest they should at last curse and blaspheme God like the damned, to whom they feel themselves to be like : as we have it, Psalm vi. And when he here mentions the praises of others, and not his own, he thereby shews how much he is like unto the accursed and the damned. And this is the very thing that increases his complaint and his grief, — that Israel, being so many times saved, praised the Lord, while he was utterly forsaken, and



was in danger of never praising God at all, but of cursing him only.

In the midst of all these his straits therefore, he agonizes in mind to persevere with Israel in the praises of God, even though he should not be saved with Israel; he struggles to acknowledge and favour the holiness of God though he himself was defiled by the hands of sinners, of men, and of devils, and made the vilest and most despised of all things; and he proclaims God as the inhabiter of rest, though he himself is in the midst of perturbation of the most wandering terrors, and of the most disquieting distresses, and is like dust before the wind, not having one resting-place.

*Ver. 4.—Our fathers hoped in thee, they hoped in thee and thou deliveredst them.*

*Ver. 5.—They cried unto thee, and were saved: they hoped in thee, and were not confounded.*

How much like envy and murmuring against God are these words? For it was the same God; and yet, he heard the fathers that hoped and trusted in him, and delivered them; but now, he turns away from Christ hoping in him and crying unto him. And this is a most grievous thing to bear, and most powerfully driving to desperation and cursing,—that the same God should deal differently with the fathers than with him who now calls; and that, not from any fault of his; for these are the feelings of one under this temptation. There seems here, indeed, as to appearance, and very powerfully and prominently, that there is no small degree of iniquity and injustice in God. For it was thus that the damned accused God, that, when all things were just alike in men, he saved some and forsook others of his mere will. You see, therefore, how the temptation to blasphemy and cursing here pressed upon Christ. He was tempted in all things. And it was the feeling of this, though without the consent, under this temptation, that forced him to break out into these words; and this was that he might overcome for us all these temptations in us.

Thou therefore, O Lord, art the praise of Israel, who hast so often delivered those that trust in thee : whereby thou hast caused them to make thee their praise, their hymn, and their song. But, (saith Christ) what art thou unto me who hope in thee, and cry unto thee? He does not dare to say thou art not my praise : even though there is now nothing to excite and call forth his praises. Thus, Christ seems as it were to swallow up all the temptation to blasphemy into himself, which was continually on the point as it were of breaking out ; and he remained fluctuating and dumb between blasphemy and praise. For that staff of consolation had fallen from Christ which supported the children of Israel in their praise, and on which they leaned : as we have it, Psalm cxix. 53, “ I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord, and comforted myself.” And Psalm lxxvii. 11, “ I will remember the works of the Lord : surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy works and talk of thy doings.” And Psalm cxliii. 5, “ I remember the days of old : I meditate on all thy works : I muse on the works of thy hands.” For the children of Israel being armed with all these thoughts, overcame every evil : as we have it, 1 Maccabees iv. 9, “ Remember how our fathers were delivered.”

But in Christ and Christians, that hope is cut off, as it were on purpose ; and it is said to them, ‘ They were saved, but ye are forsaken : ’ or as Peter says, 1 Epist. iv. “ Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind.” For there is a different suffering, and a different consolation, and a different salvation under the New Testament. Thus Christ recurs to the works of the Lord, and remembers his works of old from the beginning, and exercises himself in his doings. But he was not here consoled, but the more deeply sunk into distress, for all things to him were quite the contrary ; and this is what tortures the distressed conscience beyond all conception. For that of the old proverb is true, that, ‘ for the miserable to have companions in their misery, as an example of some suffering the same things, is a great

alleviation of misery:’ as Peter saith, 1 Epist. v. 9, “Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” On the other hand, solitude and suffering, where there is no example of any suffering the same things, and especially in those afflictions which are brought upon us of God, (which this kind of sufferer sensibly feels,) is an inconsolable torment. For here, the evil eye (as it is called) is vexed at the happiness of another, as well as at its own misery; and it is thereby greatly irritated against God. This we find happened unto Job; who, nevertheless, did not sin in all those afflictions mentioned, nor open his mouth foolishly against God; which is certainly a proof of inestimable faith.

And the reason why he repeats so many times, “they hoped,” “they hoped,” “they cried,” “they hoped,” “and thou deliveredst them,” “and they were delivered,” “and they were not confounded,” was, as I think, on account of the power of the temptation, which received additional force from being compared with the adversities of the fathers of old; and which, when thus compared, Christ could not sufficiently deplore.—But however, if any one wishes to say that the repetition was thus used that it might refer to the different fathers at different times, I will not resist him. For this verse, “Our fathers hoped in thee; they hoped in thee, and thou deliveredst them,” may refer to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who, by hoping in the Lord, were wonderfully preserved and guarded: as we have it described, Psalm cv. 13, 14, “When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; he suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov’d kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” And again, Deut. xxxii. 10, “He led him about and instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.”

And this is also to be observed, that he says, “*Our fathers:*” thus, making himself as one of the people, on account of the assumption of the flesh: whereby, he was

the true and natural Son of the Father, though not carnally nor naturally born.

*Ver. 6.—But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*

When some of the fathers will have it that Christ is in this place called “a worm,” because he was without Father, without carnal intercourse of sex, and born from a mother only, and, “no man,” because he was God,—this, I think, is an untimely interpretation of the sense of this passage: for Christ is not here speaking of the manner of his nativity, or of his nature, but of his passion, as being a poor worm of a creature. But I believe that Christ made use of this comparison, because, in a proverbial way, we are accustomed to call those ‘corruption’ and ‘worms,’ whom we greatly despise and wish to represent as abject: as we have it, Job xxv. 6, “How much less man that is corruption, and the Son of man that is a worm?” And again, Isaiah xli. 14, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, who are the dead of Israel.” And again, Job xvii. 14, “I have said unto corruption, Thou art my father: and to the worm, Thou art my mother, and sister.” But, according to my mind, “worm” does not only imply a thing of no hope or use, but also that which is a nausea or an abomination, and which is begotten in rottenness and putrefaction, and lives and dies in it.—Thus, Christ, being forsaken in his ignominious sufferings, like a worm in the midst of corruption, was of no farther hope or use in the eyes of men; nay, he was a nausea and an abomination on account of the dreadful disgust and ignominy of the cross. In like manner also, the church, under the like sufferings, is despaired of and called a worm by Isaiah: as we have before seen. For this verse paints forth the minds and feelings of men with respect to the sufferings of Christ: they are disgusted and offended at them, even though they may appear outwardly to be good men: for in their eyes, the cross and passion of Christ and of *his*, is filthy, nauseous, and as a worm, rottenness, and abomination:

as Moses prefigured it when he fled from his rod upon its being turned into a serpent, *Exod. iv.*

And in the same manner of speech it is that Christ says, "And no man:" wherein the Spirit took especial care not to put the noun, signifying the nature of *ADAM*, but the excellency of *AISCH*; that no one might say, that the truth of the human nature is here denied. And it is said also, *Isaiah liii. 3*, that "he was despised and rejected of men;" in order to shew his infirmity and uselessness in the sight of men. And he also here speaks of the mind and feelings of men contemplating the sufferings of Christ: in whose eyes, he is of no worth, and not even worthy of being called a man, but altogether despicable.

But this he says again by way of comparison, to shew the depth of his sorrow. 'Our fathers (saith he) hoped in thee and thou deliveredst them, and savedst them,' but, as to me, thou hast so forsaken me who cried unto thee, and hoped in thee, that I am a worm and no man in the eyes of all.' For they (as *Augustine* explains this) hoped in God and obtained salvation in this life; but the Lord himself here was scourged and considered as no man, and no one came to his help; he was crowned with thorns, and no one stood by him; he was lifted up on the cross, and no one came to rescue him. These things did Christ suffer: there was no strength left in him: so that no one was ever so forsaken. Nor was this all.—For again, 'Our fathers hoped in thee, and were not confounded;' nay, they were honoured and rendered renowned throughout the world: as it is said of *David*, *2 Sam. vii. 9*, "I have made thee a great name like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." But Christ was made a reproach of men and despised of the people; that is, such an object or thing as men are wont to flee as a reproach, and to imprecate on others as such. As if Christ had said, I am made a proverb and an example of evil imprecation; for we must receive "this reproach" both actively and passively: that is, that by which men are made a reproach, and that by which they reproach

others, or abuse them ; or, that which they imprecate on each other.—And so also, this “despised,” or ‘abject,’ must be received in the same way, as signifying that by which men are made abject, and that by which they made others abject, or cast them off and despise them : as Paul saith, 1 Cor. iv. 13, in a more expressive manner, “We are made as the filth of the earth, and as the offscouring of all things unto this day.”

And in this same way also, Christ was made a curse. For his disciples could be loaded with no greater reproach than its being said of them that they were Christians : as it is said, Psalm xxxi. 11, “I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear unto mine acquaintance.” And again, Psalm lxxxviii. 8, “Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me, and made me an abomination unto them.” And Psalm lxix. 8, “I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.” For this being made a reproach and an abject remains to this day, and will do unto the end of the world. Paul calls it “the offence of the cross :” so that there are but few who are not ashamed of Christ, and are not offended at him before men. But this did not happen unto our fathers ; for they were preserved from death, and especially from an ignominious death, and always held in reverence, honour, and glory, before men.

But let us observe farther the weight of these words. We have here set forth both the horror and the consolation of these words, “men” and “people.” For who is not a man ? and, who is not of the people ? therefore, who is there that is not offended in Christ ? It is horrible therefore to think of that which is contained in these words : and yet, there is in them a consolation for those who suffer the same things, when they know what is contained in them.—Here we learn what the wisdom of the flesh, free-will, reason trying all her powers, natural abilities, and all such human endeavours can do !—They hold Christ in the highest contempt, and load him with the greatest abuse, reproach, insult, and cursing !

This is their *preparation for the reception of grace* (as they call it!) Where is now the argument of the multitude of the great, and of time, on which these sophists and these enemies to the grace of God lay so much stress?

You see, therefore, that a confessor of Christ and a preacher of the Gospel of God, must be such an one as wonders not if all men and the whole of the people abhor and abominate him; nay, unless he be thus abused and abominated, he is not yet a perfect confessor of Christ. Indeed it is an argument of his salvation thus to be a reproach of men and an abject of the people. Thus Jeremiah complains, chap. xx. 8, "Because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me and a derision daily." And Christ says plainly, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name sake." And Matt. v. 11, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

And we are to observe also, that the expressions "men" and "people" are used emphatically in the same way as John, ii. 25, uses them, "For he knew what was in man." Here he speaks of those, whom we in a general way consider to be good and pious, and whom we see to applaud and stand by the truth for a time: such as were, in the time of Christ, all those who praised and magnified God in all those things which were wonderfully wrought by him, as we have them described in the Gospels. For as long as truth reigns and is held in honour, and goes on prosperously, such men are wonderfully ardent in pursuing and favouring it. These Christ represented and set forth in the parable of the seed cast upon a rock, Luke viii.: which, when it sprung up, immediately withered away, because it lacked moisture; and this he himself proves to be descriptive of such characters, because he immediately explains the parable thus, ver. 13, "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these having no root, for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away." And John, chap. ii. describes them very exactly, where he is at Jerusalem at the feast of the passover,

saying, "And many believed on his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

These, therefore, though they do not persecute the truth, and grieve when it is oppressed, yet, they do not assist it, but are ashamed of it, fear it, forsake it, are silent about it, and suffer it to be oppressed: as we have shewn, Psalm xxxi. 11, "I was a fear unto mine acquaintance:" concerning which also Christ saith, Matt. x. 32, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." And Luke xii. "He that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." Here we see him use the term "men" again. Whence we learn, how ignominious and base a thing it is before God, to be nothing than a 'man' or one of the "people;" and also, how few there are who glory in the cross of our Lord. For such are not men, but higher than men; not the people, but the armies and hosts of the Lord. Hence he is called the Lord of hosts; that is, the Lord of those warriors who are chosen out of the people: but the "people" are the common mass and dregs of mankind.

Ver. 7.—*All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they speak with their lips, they shake the head.*

Ver. 8.—*He trusted in the Lord, let him deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he wished to have him.*

To these characters now mentioned there is no reproach, because they were not ashamed of him, for they received him: theirs is all derision and railing: whose fury causes all the weak followers of Christ to be a reproach and a contempt.—And here we are to observe the particular order of the words,—that, before he rehearses evils which he suffers, he complains of the blasphemies; and before he speaks of these, he mentions the public contempt of men; and, before all these, the desertion of God himself and his forsaking him. For



this is the order of the depth of these sufferings,—the blasphemy of persecutors is more dreadful than the persecution itself; and this is increased by the public contempt of men, where there is no one to console the sufferer: and above all these things, the greatest afflictions is, that God does not console the sufferer who endures all these things, who is blasphemed, despised, and abhorred; and this is dreadful, because God is the last refuge of the miserable. Although, therefore, there was no order in the sufferings of Christ, (for all the Jews raged against him, and attacked him in every way,) yet he has beautifully reduced them here into order, in his setting them forth, beginning from the deepest, and going on to the end of all his sufferings, even unto his resurrection and the glory of his kingdom. And, therefore, this verse very appropriately follows the preceding, when he says,—“All that see me laugh me to scorn.” Not that his mother and his acquaintance derided him: but he says these things in that general way in which he saw himself a public reproach and abomination, which no one dared to console or defend. In which same manner of expression it is said, Psalm vi. 7, “I am grown old among all mine enemies.” So also here he says, There is no one to console or defend me, all men so afflict me; and not only so, but laugh me to scorn in my affliction. Not that there was no one present who favoured him; but he did not feel any thing of that favour: what he here says, therefore, is what he felt and experienced, “All they that see me laugh me to scorn.”

And this expression “All that see me” has a peculiar emphasis and force: because, the extreme of blasphemy is, to be laughed at to the face, and to have insults cast in the teeth: for those derisions and insults which are only heard, or related as spoken by others, are far more light: but to see and to be seen thus, and not to be able to turn away one’s eyes from one’s mockers and deriders,—this is an affliction that tortures dreadfully.

And of what kind this derision was, now follows,—

“They spoke with their lips” and shook their heads. Hieronymus more appropriately renders it, “they put down their lips:” for this verb expresses very descriptively the gestures of the person deriding, who, putting down and pouting his under lip, distorts his mouth at the person he is deriding. But our translator, because ‘to open the mouth,’ in scripture language, signifies ‘to speak,’ has translated it, “they speak with their lips.” But the verb here used in the Hebrew is different from that which signifies ‘to open.’ And in these words is expressed the great confidence of those who were thus enraged with Christ, and which greatly increased the affliction: for here fury seemed to have gotten the victory; and therefore found no trouble in persecuting the sufferer, who nevertheless was afflicted thereby with the greater straits.

The two verses are manifestly quoted by the Evangelists as applying expressly to Christ; so that I need now take no trouble in proving that point; for Matthew says, chap. xxvii. 39, “And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, saying, He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”

And here also we may by the way observe, that the Evangelists never treat of any part of the sufferings of Christ in more and weightier words than this derision and blasphemous insulting, which is described in these verses. Nay, the very words themselves of these verses sufficiently shew the fiery fury and dreadful atrocity of these darts: for they continue to say with incessantly galling words, “He trusted in God!” And again “Let him deliver him now!” And again, “Let him save him now!” And again, “Seeing he delighted in him!” For thus did they cast in his teeth these taunting revilings concerning his confidence of salvation, which increased to an intolerable weight the pangs of salvation then denied. For it is incredible to what a degree his heart was pierced by these most powerful taunts and jeering words.—These are those fiery darts *πονηρου*; that is, of the most wicked adversary, concerning which, Paul speaks,

Ephes. vi. For what assault can be more violent, than for our hope in God to be shaken; and not only to be shaken, but to be so shaken as to be dashed altogether; and not only so, but to be spoken against, rejoiced over, insulted, and derided!

And moreover, which is the extreme of all torments and punishments, what punishment is greater than to have cast in our teeth, and to be tempted with, the immutable predestination of God, or rather, his immovable hatred: for this they did when they said, "Seeing he delighted in him." And this hatred they do not only denounce, (which would have been sufficiently grievous to be borne;) but they insult him as being thus hated, and deride him, triumphing over him. For these fiery darts of the wicked did not touch Christ in the ear only, but we are to believe that they sunk down into his heart, and penetrated into the marrow of his bones with an unsupportable violence. And this also was necessary for our sakes; that all these evils, being conquered and overcome in Christ, might be wholly robbed of their power to hurt us.

AND since this place calls upon us to make a little digression, and that digression will be useful, we will here stop awhile, and draw out of this part of the Psalm that which will be useful unto us against a time to come.

In the first place, we ought to understand and be thankful, that Christ has not only overcome all these sufferings, and rendered them harmless unto us, but has even made them holy and wholesome in himself by having embraced and absorbed them in his own most pure and holy heart: so that, henceforth, he that is a Christian, becomes the more happy and the more blessed the more of these sufferings he endures, and the more they are like unto Christ's. But unhappy and wholly a stranger unto Christ is the man, who obstinately casts away from him and shuns these sufferings. For here, in these two characters, is fulfilled that word of Malachi, chap. ii. 'I will bless your cursings, and curse your blessings.'

We have here, therefore, represented unto us, as in a picture, that last war and conflict wherein we contend with the devil, and so, as it were, with God himself and all creatures, in the hour of death: where Satan, with his last, and therefore, his most skilfully marshalled forces, makes his attack upon us. For he does not here drive us to desperation, knowing that by such an attack he would only excite us to resist him: but he assaults our very resistance itself, and laughs at our hope as if long ago vanquished, and thus endeavours to repress our very attempt to hope. This is not the case in other temptations; in which hope and faith are generally engaged in the conflict. But here faith and hope, which ought to fight, are themselves attacked; and so, there is a conflict about the conflict! there is a war about waging another war! a fighting that it might be allowed us to fight! a resisting him who would dissuade us from resisting! He, therefore, is first to be overcome by greater labour who would draw us away from fighting, than he with whom we have to fight!

O heavens! what will all those law-workmen, and all those law-righteous ones do here, who have never known what faith and the Word are! for here, the truly righteous is scarcely saved, who well understands the power of the Word and of faith!—What then shall the righteous soul do when surrounded with these straits? Let him remember his Lord, who said, “The servant is not greater than his Lord:” for if his Lord cried and was not heard, and endured all those things which are here spoken of, he ought to conceive joy, or at least patience, when the same things happen unto him the servant.

Let us consider then this whole army of Satan’s terrors, which strives to work despair in those who are at the point of death. The *first* is, they are seen by all. The *second* is, they are laughed at to scorn. The *third* is, all shoot out their lips at them. The *fourth* is, they move their heads at them. The *fifth* is, they hear them say with a taunt, “He hoped in God: let him deliver him now.” The *sixth* is, they hear them say with a

taunt, "Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." Here, then, you may say with Job, v. 19, "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil come nigh thee."

The *first* terror is then, when the eyes of the soul are opened, and it feels that it stands naked, and is made manifest in the sight of the whole creation, together with all the shame of its actions and ill-spent life. And here even that soul which was the best and most honourable in the world, is now found to be vile, foul, and full of shame, and finds no hiding-place or refuge where it can cover itself. For the soul, as it were, now goes out of its former coverings, and is stripped of all corporal creatures, which were, before, its coverings and garments; and it is compelled to see, and permit to be seen, all the secrets of its shame. Here it is that the ungodly, trying to hold fast this their covering, and feeling a dreadful aversion to being thus exposed naked, and yet, not being able to stand against the almighty hand that strips them, cry out, 'Ye mountains, fall on us, and, ye rocks, cover us.' Here it is that they know what it is that is said, 'All see me.' For, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops."

The *second* terror is, 'when all these things laugh you to scorn:' for they not only do not cover the soul in this state, but deride it. Not that the good creatures of God do deride the soul in reality: but they all seem to the wicked, while they are in this state, to be laughing at them, deriding them, and forsaking them: and they seem also not to be pitied of God, but to be derided even by him also. As we have it, Matthew xxv. in the wise virgins, who laughed at the foolish ones, when they said, "Lest there be not enough for us and for you: but go ye rather unto them that sell, and buy for yourselves." For when the soul is covered with shame on account of its evil deeds and ungodly life, every sight of

every creature that is seen will seem to have a voice in it reproaching the person and upbraiding him for his wicked life, and deriding him for his folly, in not doing otherwise, and not doing better while his life was granted him. Thus, comparing the goodness of all creatures with his own iniquity and ungodliness, he stands as a shame-covered object of derision in the midst of them all: even as the Jews had Christ in the midst of them as a most wicked and impious wretch, as if they themselves were righteous; holding him in derision in the sight of all. And the devils especially here busy themselves, and weary the soul with the most terrible cogitations.

The *third* terror (if these two are not enough, and if the soul is strong in faith, and is able to overcome them in a measure,) advances to greater lengths, and begins to carry on the siege with the most alarming terrors of the scriptures. None but the most threatening and terrible portions are brought forth, together with the most awful examples of divine wrath. Such words as these are set before the soul, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment." 'Evil shall hurt the wicked man to his destruction.' And again, "Wo unto you, hypocrites." And all those other words and examples which are pointed at the wicked. And when these words are thus injected into the soul, it is an easy matter (and is always the case) for the natural infirmity and scrupulousness of each man's own conscience to fall in with them, and say, 'Thou art just such an one.'—And this is what David here says, "They shoot out their lips."

The *fourth* terror is, when they 'move the head;' that is, if the soul strives to support itself with the consolation of the Gospel of Christ, who is the head of all, against the violence of the angry and killing law, and its darts maliciously and wrongly pointed by Satan, Satan here moves this head, and renders it doubtful and uncertain. For although the lips and heads of the impious Jews were evil, yet they do not unappropriately represent to us the use and manner of a thing that is

good : for both things, the law and the Gospel, are good works of God, though they are badly and pervertedly used by the wicked. So that the good law and the good Gospel may both be handled and forced upon us badly and pervertedly by devils, and especially in this last hour, in which they would have nothing salutary or sound left to the miserable soul.

The *fifth* terror is when the soul thinks within itself thus, that Christ does nothing but that which God has ordained that he should do : and therefore, it always hears that scripture sounding in its ears, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And also this, "It is not good to take the children's meat and to cast it to the dogs." Hereby Christ is denied to be the head, and the hope is fixed in God alone, (or absolutely,) that he would cause Christ to be given. And here the matter is carried on without a Mediator, and there is a disputing about the good-pleasure and the will of God, to which Christ always refers himself, saying, 'And he that created me, has rested in my tabernacle. And he hath said unto me, Dwell thou in Jacob, and have thine inheritance in Israel, and send down thy roots among mine elect.' Here, therefore, it is concluded, that Christ is the head only to the elect, and that by the immutable decree of God : and here the soul is brought to that highest of all perils, predestination. And this is what is intended by the words which are here represented as said in the tauntings of the adversaries, "He trusted in God that he would deliver him." As if they had said to the poor soul, 'That Christ is not thine thou plainly seest, because thou art forsaken, and art in doubt, whether God accounts thee among the number of the elect, to whom Christ is the head, or not.' And from this doubt the soul is driven into that last evil which now follows.

The *sixth* and last evil, then, is, where there is a conclusion arising from the 'doubt' last mentioned,—namely, the soul concludes now, that he is not predestinated unto salvation. And as by the preceding terror the gates of hell were opened, and a taste of hell was

felt; so in this last evil and peril the soul seems to be wholly thrust into and swallowed up of hell, and the pit seems to shut its mouth upon it, and it seems as if it were almost fixed as an inhabitant of hell. And this feeling the terrors and demons produce when they say, "Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." For they do not simply say, "Seeing he delighted," (or 'willed,' as the Hebrew is;) they do not simply say, seeing 'he can,' or 'he knows how;' nor do they only say, 'seeing he wills,' but they add, "seeing he wills *him*." Now here, no one doubts that God 'can' save, 'knows' how to save, and 'wills' to save; but the question to the soul is, whether he 'wills' to save *him*. Here, therefore, the adversaries raise the doubt, and try to make him think that all hopes are vain. Here he is reckoned among the wicked sons of perdition; nor does the miserable soul itself feel any thing else but that it is really so. Here these blasphemies, and murmurings, and cursings, are almost within the very gates of hell; and God begins to be considered unjust, savage, and cruel; and all those other things which accompany such thoughts.

What then shall the soul do that feels itself overwhelmed and close bound in these straits?—Before all things, let it take heed that it dispute not with devils and evil cogitations concerning all these things: let it give no answer, but remain dumb to all these things which are objected to it, and suffer them to pass by: as the Hebrew saints did, Dan. iii. For when the king of Babylon said, Dan. iii. 15, "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" they answered, "We are not careful, O king, to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods," &c.

And so here, also, Christ is wholly silent, and does not answer a syllable to all these blasphemies, for an example unto us that we should do the same: for we shall overcome these evils in no other way than that in



which Christ overcame them. Though it is a hard thing to keep silence and to remain wholly quiet, and permit all these most irritating and most bitter suggestions and sayings to pass by: but still, as there is no other way in which it can be accomplished, we must labour hard to do it, and listen to that word of Isaiah vii. 4, "Take heed and be quiet." And Isaiah xxx. 15, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." And Lam. iii. 26, "It is good that a man should quietly wait for the salvation of God. He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there might be hope." For this silence, which is so salutary to the soul, Satan cannot in any way endure, and this it is that he endeavours to disturb by all manner of torment. Let the one thus tempted, therefore, never lose sight of this example of silence given us by Christ.

And then, let him fight with faith against faith. For as faith acts upon things not seen, and is the substance of things hoped for; here we have need of faith only, and that faith which enables the man to believe, that God does, and will do, with him every thing that is most just, whether he be saved, or whether he be lost.—And here it is, that the glory and praise of God remain in our mouth, while we ascribe unto God nothing but righteousness in all his will, even though human sense and reason, and the persuasion of devils, powerfully drive us into the contrary. And, it is impossible that he should perish, who thus ascribes glory to God and justifies him in all his work and all his will: as it is said, 1 Sam. ii. "Him that honoureth me, I will glorify," &c.

Ver. 9.—*But thou art he that took me out of the belly: my hope from my mother's breasts.*

Ver. 10.—*I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.*

Here the tribulation begins to grow lighter, and hope inclines towards victory; a support, though small, and sought out with deep anxiety, is now found. For after he had felt that he suffered without any parallel or

example, so that the wonderful works of God as displayed toward the fathers afforded him no help, he comes to the wonderful works of God toward himself, and in these he finds the good-will of God towards him, and which was displayed towards him alone in so singular a way. So that, he who was singularly alone from all Israel in all other things, also singularly suffered, and was singularly saved. At length, therefore, after searching into all preceding examples in vain, he finds and discovers the wonderful works of God, as displayed towards himself, and with these he animates himself into a confidence of prayer and supplication for help:—so acutely and exquisitely do these straits drive us to search into all these chinks and crevices for help in the time of need!

In these two verses, he repeats and inculcates that work of God whereby he took him out of the belly, that he might confirm his hope and strengthen himself therein. And thus does the anxious soul continue to repeat over and over again that in which it hopes and rests, that it might persevere in keeping the mind stayed upon God. For here the same things are repeated again and again, really on account of the greatness of his feelings. For, that he might the more effectually fix in his heart this work of God, he does not speak separately and particularly of his birth and bringing up in a simple way, but sets them forth by a circumlocution and various figures. He calls his birth, ‘the being taken out of the belly;’ his bringing up, he calls ‘his hope while hanging at his mother’s breasts.’ For we are to believe, that this is all thus spoken to commend unto us the signal miracle wrought of God, in his being conceived in a manner contrary to all nature by the Holy Ghost, and being born of a virgin mother. So that, there is a peculiar emphasis and force in the expression, “He that took me out of the belly,”—in this way:—

Other sons of men are born of the belly of her who is both a mother, and a woman not a virgin; and also, while the belly is not only not unwilling and resisting, but yielding with a cogent and impelling consent of lust,

which forces the fœtus into the recesses of nature. But (saith Christ) thou hast taken me out of a belly that was chaste, and pure from all seed (because it was a virgin); which not only did not consent to the act on its part, but had nature all the while resisting and remaining passive under thy hand. For, as the bee extracts its honey from the flower most skilfully, and does not hurt or violate the flower; so the Holy Spirit extracted or took out Christ from the belly of the virgin, without at all violating or hurting it: so that Christ had truly a fleshly nature without sin, even as the honey has the nature of the flower without the violation of the flower. Therefore, nature did not pour out of itself this offspring, but God drew and took it out of nature, nature itself remaining unviolated and uncorrupted. But when *our* birth is spoken of, it is in this gross way, “Thou hast made me as the clay; hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?” Where the generation of the flesh is described, as it were, almost immodestly; were it not that we know it to be the word and declaration of the all-pure Spirit.

And he says, “from the belly,” not ‘from the loins of the man,’ hast thou taken me. As my mother (he would say) was a virgin, unviolated in the conception and in the birth, so, I was conceived and born in a singular way, different from all others, without sin, and without becoming deserving of such tribulations. For here, Christ looks at his innocence, wherein also he consoles himself, seeing that there was nothing in himself that should be a cause of his thus suffering, but it was solely because he bore the sins of others: as he says also in another Psalm, xxxv. 15, “The objects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not:” that is, I was not conscious of deserving any such things.

“My hope upon my mother’s breasts:” that is, as thou art he who made me hope even when I was hanging on the breasts of my mother, and when I was nourished by the help of another, being unable to help myself, that is, from my very beginning, how much less shalt thou now forsake me for ever? As thou art he who alone hadst care

of me then, thou the same alone shalt have care of me now, when I am again helpless in myself. Here, again, this verse makes Christ to be without sin, when it shews us that he hoped even when an infant. For hope is the work of grace, and not of nature: therefore, this hoping cannot apply to the sons of men, who are born children of wrath and unbelief. For though the Lord has a care of them also, providentially, of his own free gift, yet he makes them not subjects of hope, nor fills them with the Spirit, until they are changed by another birth, and are afterwards 'taken out of the belly' of the church: then, they hang on the breasts of that same church, and do that in the Spirit which Christ did both in the flesh and in the Spirit.

And this is the same which now follows, "Upon thee have I been cast from the womb;" which, as I have observed, is said by way of repetition; excepting that, this more clearly points out the hope of Christ in God. For to be cast upon God wholly, is to commit one's-self unto God, and, as we say, to cast one's-self with reliance into the hands of God: as we have it said, Psalm lv. 22, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, (that is, thy care or thy trouble,) and he shall sustain thee." And, 1 Peter v. 7, "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." And, Psalm xl. 17, "But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord careth for me." And, Psalm xxvii. 10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

And this is the same here, when Christ encouraging himself speaks of God as his creator and preserver from his youth, and sets it forth with sweet and fervent expressions, speaking of the belly, the womb, and the breasts of his mother. For these works of God carry a great deal of consolation with them, when contemplated with anxious investigation. It is as if thou shouldst say with Christ,—Thou wast so careful of me, O God, that thou formedst me in the womb of my mother: and then, that I might be preserved and nourished when thus formed by thee, thou filledst the breasts of my mother with milk, and cherishedst me in her bosom.

It is in the same feelings as these that Augustine expatiates in his *Confessions*, Book i. praising God for, and admiring, his creation; and, as he says, lauding the mercies of God for taking him up and nourishing him, and for his tender care, through the instrumentality of his mother. And David says, Psalm cxxxix. 15, 16, "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book were all my members written." Which thoughts, although they seem puerile and weak, and are considered most ill-timed, and not used at a proper time when employed in the midst of such great dangers; (for it is thus that the wisdom of the flesh complains of the neglect of decorum, which should in such times see that all things are done manfully and courageously;) yet experience, nay the example of Christ also teaches us and rightly instructs us in this place, that we should engage our memory about these most sweet and most tender works of God, and, in the midst of the most terrible and powerful effects of the wrath and rod of God, go back to the tenderness of the milk, the belly, and the mother's care, and all those most tender mercies which God manifested towards us in our infant years. So that, as in the day of evil we are commanded to remember the good, so, in the day of most powerful chastisements, we are to remember the tender mercies; and, while we suffer as men, we are to call to mind those things which were bestowed upon us in our childhood.

In a word, how powerful and efficacious this remembrance of the milk, and of our mother's breasts and care is, and how sweet, and pure, and chaste, and delightful, all these things appear, which, out of temptation, would appear filthy and contemptible, experience and feeling sense alone can teach. When we begin to view, with a contemplating heart, Christ hanging at the breasts of his mother, or lying in a manger, what evil is not put to flight, what infirmity is not strengthened! Only make the trial, and you will understand what it is to behold

that divine Majesty engaged in such infantine things; that is, in such scenes of weakness and puerility!

But yet, Christ alone can say, "Upon thee have I been cast from the womb." For we are cast upon the devil from the womb, with respect to spiritual life; though we also are cast upon God from the womb, with respect to our natural life. 'For God wills that all men should be thus saved; and he multiplies his grace, that he might save both man and beast, opening his hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing.' Hence, it was Christ only that could say, 'Thou wert my God from my mother's womb:' for we are all born idolaters, and conceived and brought up in sin.

Thus, in contemplating his own innocence, and the all-tender solicitude of his Father, the greater tortures of his mind by degrees give way; and he comes now to the tortures of the body, praying with still more powerful earnestness than in the beginning, where he complained that he was forsaken and not heard. Now he begins to pray indeed, and to hope that he shall be heard; and he speaks now in a different way from what he did at the beginning. For now, being instructed, he knows that he is heard, not <sup>unto</sup> unto the saving of the mortal life, but of the better.—He now says therefore—

Ver. 11.—*Do not depart far from me, for trouble is hard at hand; for there is none to help.*

Hieronymus and the Hebrew have it thus, 'Be not far from me.' For Christ does not mean that God was now departing, as if he had been near before; because, he had before said that he was forsaken. But what he means, is, that God would not continue to remain afar off, but that he would at length hasten to his relief, as he had now remained far off too long. And that this is the meaning of it, is manifest in the next clause, "For trouble is hard at hand:" which trouble would not have been thus nigh, if God had not been far off. Therefore, saith Christ, Let the Lord draw near, that the tribulation may depart: let him be near, that the tribulation may be far off. For this trouble or tribulation

being hard at hand, is not to be understood of the time, as if it was very near coming upon him, but we are to understand it of the violence, and intenseness, and vehemence of it; or we may understand it of the place,—that it was not away from him, but that it violently pressed and rushed upon him: as he himself explains it in that which follows, “And there is none to help.” As he had before said, when he complained that salvation was far off: whereby he signified, not the time, but the intenseness of his suffering: and so we are to understand it here.

And here you may see that, “All they that see me laugh me to scorn,” refers to his persecutors. Because, although his mother and his friends were near him, yet they seemed as if they were not, seeing that none of them helped him. And this increased his tribulation rather than mitigated it: nay, he now even suffered on their account, and they were tortured with him in mind.

Ver. 12.—*Many calves have compassed me; fat bulls have beset me around.*

Here Christ begins to set forth in order what that “tribulation” was that was “hard at hand.”—Because, says he, I am alone in the midst of many calves and fat bulls; that is, the furious people of the Jews and their rulers. For there not only was no one to help, but he himself could by no means escape being beset on all sides: as we have it, Psalm ii. 1, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together.” For he calls the people “calves,” and the rulers “bulls of Basan;” as is manifest from Psalm lxxviii. 30, “The multitude of bulls, with the calves of the people.”

But you will say, perhaps, Does not Christ impatiently retaliate upon his persecutors, when he calls them calves and bulls? By no means. But he here, in an allegorical way, sets forth in most short and expressive words, the manners and violence of his perse-

cutors, and also, the cause of his own passion. For "bull" and "calf" signify the ministry of the word: as we have it, 1 Cor. ix. 9, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." For Christ seems in these allegorical expressions to intimate that he himself was a 'bull' and a 'calf,' and thus represents himself as one 'calf' suffering among many, and one 'bull' among many fat and strong bulls. Thus it is written of that man, Gen. xlix. 6, "In their fury they slew a man, and in their self-will they unnerved a bull:" which we corruptly read "they digged down a wall: but by a corruption of the scripture, we may very easily read "wall" for "bull." And Psalm lxix. 31, "This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs." The cause, therefore, of his suffering, is the Word of his doctrine of the ministry of the Gospel: on account of which it is, that the teachers of human laws and the ministers of works, have been infuriated from the very beginning of the world. And so also Christ was put to death for his doctrine, by none others than those impious teachers and leaders of the people.

And moreover, as he makes these bulls to be many and strong, and himself one poor and tender one among them without a helper,—this is what I have often said—that the wicked are included in their own fat, as in Psalm xvii. ; that is, that they depend upon their magnitude and multitude; and that, when they find themselves without truth on their side and cannot conquer by reason, they attempt to overwhelm the poor solitary ministers of the Word by violence and tumult. For this all the argument that they have in their ungodliness,—that the many and the great are on their side, and that the poor minister of the Word of truth is solitary and stands alone: whereas the scripture, on the other hand, sets things forth in a contrary way, and makes their own argument to stand directly against them. And therefore the Holy Spirit instructs the messengers of the Word by this example of Christ, that they might know, that they must always have the multitude of the



commonalty and the highest of the world as their adversaries. Thus we have it, Psalm cxix. 161, "Princes have perscuted me without a cause." And again, "Even the princes sat and spake against me."

Christ, therefore, appropriately gives to each their descriptive appellation. He calls the people **PARR**: that is, a young bull, or heifer, robust and sturdy, and so, unmanageable: because, the commonalty and the multitude of the people are strength, without understanding, without judgment, and without discipline. For who can tame or manage that beast when infuriated? And hence it is that Christ ascribed rage and tumult unto them, Psalm ii. saying, "Why do the heathen rage:" that is, Why are the nations in a tumult? And he says, "these calves are many," because the commonalty consists of multitude only without judgment, as I said; fit only for running together and making at umult, being altogether void of, and unable to bear, any moderation.

And he calls the rulers "Bulls of Bashan," that is, 'fat.' And this Basan is sufficiently notorious, whether we consider it a term applicable to the earth, or a general term signifying fatness: for it signifies riches, opulence, pleasure, power, glory, and whatever is great or eminent in the world: such as the king of Moab, Eglon, Judges iii.; Amalec, Agag, 1 Sam. xv.; and the 'fat ones' of Israel, Psalm lxxvii; and Og the king of Basan, prefigured. Therefore, the multitude, the magnitude, the height, the riches, the favour, the delights, the glory of the world, that is, the whole world, stands opposed to the Gospel of God, and to his poor, solitary, small, few, weak, afflicted, despised, and hated ministers.—And the expressions "beset" and "encompassed" have a peculiar emphasis, as we have shewn in the preceding Psalms.

Ver. 13.—*They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*

This they did when they cried out "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Concerning which Jeremiah saith, chap. xii. 8, "Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest, it crieth out against me, therefore

have I hated it." Here the prophet intimates the impetuous and precipitate anger of the Jews. Because, as a ravening and a roaring lion with open mouth does not meditate or consider what it is doing, but with a ravenous impetuosity is intent only on seizing, lacerating, and devouring; so the ungodly high-priests, through their fury, neither think, nor see, nor hear, what they are doing, nor what ought to be done; but are intent only on this one thing, to destroy wholly and most cruelly. And there is a peculiar signification of fury in the expression and figure of a lion with open mouth, more so than if he had merely said, as a lion with extended talons: for they did not consider it enough that Christ should be torn and killed, but they wished him to be devoured and swallowed up altogether, that his memory might be entirely abolished from off the earth.

Such is every feeling of the ungodly against the godly: according to that of Proverbs i. 12, "Let us swallow them up alive as the grave, and whole as those that go down into the pit." And so also, Psalm vii. 2, "Lest he tear my soul like a lion." And Psalm x. 9, "He lieth secretly as a lion in his den." And xvii. 12, "Like a lion that is greedy of his prey."—The adjective "like" is not in the Hebrew; but Christ calls the people of the Jews a ravening and a roaring lion: which perhaps was, that he might set forth the rage of the Jews more forcibly.

Ver. 14.—*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are scattered: my heart is like wax, melting in the midst of my belly.*

This pouring out of Christ many apply to his blood: because (say they) as water above all other liquors is generally poured out to the last drop, so the blood of Christ was utterly exhausted from his body. But this seems to be a mere supposition of a man who looks only at the thick liquors of oil and honey, because wine and many other liquors are not less poured out to the last drop than water.

This interpretation would be more applicable if it

were understood in this way,—that the blood of Christ was thus copiously, and profusely, and usefully, poured out as water; than which nothing is poured out more profusely and with less consideration or regard. From which we may understand, that the blood of Christ was most utterly despised, and held in no estimation in the eyes of those who shed it: as we have it, Psalm lxxix. 9, “Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem.” For other liquors are poured out for the most part with care and into other vessels to receive it; such as wine, oil, balsam, myrrh, and the like.

But, according to my opinion, this pouring out will better and more appropriately apply to the whole of Christ: in the same way as it is said, 2 Sam. xiv. 14, “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.” And Gen. xlix. 4, “Thou art poured out like water, thou shalt not excel.” By which it might be signified that Christ, was poured out most contemptibly as water, and exposed to all around to be poured out as they would. And to increase the description, it may signify, that he was received and preserved by none, but cast out as if they despaired of any resurrection in him; just as water when poured out upon the ground is not taken up again. By which words it is signified, what Christ was in the eyes of men, and even of the good and righteous; for even to them he seemed now to be at an end, because they gave up all hopes of his being preserved or restored to them by any one; as they say, Luke xxiv. 21, “But we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel.”

But if any one will, he may understand the pouring out thus,—that he was poured out as to his strength: that is, as Daniel speaks, that no strength was left in him, and that he was wholly exhausted, all his strength being most profusely and regardless poured out like water, and nothing but an empty and infirm vessel of flesh left, which, before, was most full of all power.—Let each reader judge for himself; but I confess that this last is, to me, the best of the acceptations mentioned.

“ All my bones are scattered : ” that is, divided and separated from each other. And although this may seem to refer to the crucifixion, yet, I think that passage below, “ They told all my bones,” refers more especially to the crucifixion itself; and that here, it is the pouring out of his strength that is signified; which arose from his bones being so weakened by the terrors arising from his internal straits, and by his external sufferings, that no one bone supported the other, but were, as it were, weakened by each other, as all the different joints of a thing are, where one joint gives way. Whereas, in those who are whole, the bones are so compacted together, that the one supports and strengthens the other, by discharging the mutual functions. And common experience shews us, that where persons are weakened by disease, or frightened above measure, the bones are weakened and rendered useless for the doing of any kind of work. The bones of Christ, therefore, were not so “ dispersed ” as to be separated from each other; but it was the different offices and functions of the bones, so that they mutually failed to support and strengthen each other.

“ My heart is become like wax, melting in the midst of my belly.”—This is not properly “ belly,” in the Hebrew, because the heart is not in the belly but in the intestines, and hidden under the breast.—This suffering also pertains not to the spirit, but to the senses; and is that suffering, by which the heart, the first organ of the spirit, being bruised under sensible and spiritual torments, trembles, shakes, and fluctuates with sensible motions: and this is a very frequent complaint throughout the Psalms: as in Psalm xl. 12, “ Therefore my heart faileth me.” And Psalm xxxviii. 10, “ My heart panteth, my strength faileth me.” In which expression there is a wonderful emphasis, and it exactly explains the allegory here made use of, when the heart is said to be like wax; signifying, that is, it turns this way and that, revolves and revolves, like any round object turning backward and forward, and can find no rest.—Those who are confident and happy, have a trembling of heart also, but is different from this both in its causes

and effects: they are said, on account of their confidence and happiness, to be comforted in their hearts, and to remain like the solid rock, firm and immovable: as we have it, Psalm xxvii. 14, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." But, on the contrary, in those that are bruised and alarmed, the heart grows soft and melts, so that it becomes like melting wax. And again, on the other hand, when the wicked waste away and are confounded, they are like that description of Micah i. 4, "As wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place." And Psalm lxxviii. 2, "As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish from the presence of the Lord." And this melting is described thus, Psalm xxxix. 11, "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth."

And when he adds "in the midst of my belly," or intestines, it seems to be spoken in a way of fulness of expression, such as those use who are filled with complaints and afflicted. Unless it be spoken to shew the difference between those sufferings which invade us from without, and afflict us by objects presented to us, and these which torture us from within and are spiritual afflictions, which, without any objects presented to our senses, seize upon the heart within in an unspeakable and unparalleled manner, and melt it and reduce it to nothing. So that the sufferer feels indeed that he is perishing and melting away, and yet cannot tell nor understand, from whence or how this spirit of storms comes; and this is the reason why the person can find no rest, and is compelled to leave himself in the midst without help.

Ver. 15.—*My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth unto my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

He now goes on, as I said, with his sense-sufferings. This is a wonderful metaphor, when he says that his strength is dried up like a potsherd. In this place "my

strength" is *COHI*; that is, my energy, my effective power, my executive strength. So that the sense is, all my strength being poured out, and all my bones being broken, I melt in my heart, and am become useless for every kind of work; I can do nothing with any of my limbs; so that even if I should think of any thing, or speak of any thing, that should be done, yet strength is wanting to me to do and accomplish it. For when the spirit is in its vigour and present with him the man exults, and buds forth like a fruitful tree putting forth its fruits and he does all things prosperously, and his strength is more and more invigorated. As it is said, Prov. xx. 29, "The glory of young men is their strength." But when the spirit departs and the heart melts, the strength dries up and fails to accomplish any thing, and is like a dried-up tree, that fails to bring forth fruit.

And Christ, in order to make his great infirmity known, compares his dryness, not to that of a dry tree, but to that of a potsherd, than which nothing is more dry, more devoid of juice, and more parched. For he was so exhausted of all vital juice and natural nutriment, that he was wholly dried and parched up: concerning which, it is that Isaiah, chap. liii. seems to speak, when he saith, "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," for out of this parched potsherd, and this great infirmity, grew up that most sappy, most flourishing, and most fruitful church. So that this dried-up strength did not signify any positive infirmity, or any fixed disease, but only an inability to work at that time: as it now farther follows.

"My tongue cleaveth unto my jaws." This wants no exposition or explanation: for a sherd is dry, parched, and bibulous: and so Christ was thirsty, when on the cross, from being thus dried up. And thus thirst and dryness arose more from his spiritual straits, than from his corporal afflictions. For it is incredible how this tribulation burns and dries up, and suddenly wastes all the vital moisture throughout all the limbs, and especially on the tongue, where moisture is particularly in a great

quantity. So that this verb of 'wasting' is rightly derived from the noun HAMASIM, which signifies 'a great and exceeding fire:' and therefore, we have said, that the verb means to meet, to waste away, to burn up, and to dry up: for this is the same fire which they felt, who said, Deut. xviii. 16, "Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not." And Deut. v. 24, "We have seen this day that God doth talk with man and he liveth. Now, therefore, why should we die: for this great fire will consume us." And hence it is, that our God is called "a consuming fire," Deut. iv. and Heb. xii.

"And thou hast brought me into the dust of death." This seems as it were a sort of sum of the whole, in which he includes all his sufferings, saying, that all his passions tend to this,—to bring him to the dust of death. But what is this dust of death? I think it is spoken figuratively, for, being reduced to nothing. So, Psalm vii. he seems to mean the dust of ignominy, when he says, "And lay mine honour in the dust." And 1 Kings xvi. 2, it signifies the dust of poverty, saying, "Forasmuch as I have exalted thee out of the dust." And Job vii. 5, the dust of sickness is meant, "My flesh is clothed with worms, and clods of dust." Hence, it seems proper to understand dust, in the scriptures, as signifying a thing reduced to nothing.

Ver. 16.—*For many dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

Having before enumerated the two kind of passions, that is, the spiritual and sensual, he now here mentions the third and last passion, that which is corporal, or in the limbs, and pertaining to the limbs only, and to the garments, &c.—The word "many" is not in the Hebrew. And Hieronymus renders it 'huntsmen' instead of "dogs:" and perhaps it is for the sake of making the passage accord with the title: that we may understand the huntsmen or hunting dogs, as applicable to

the "hind" here torn in pieces. But all these things are made sufficiently plain by the Gospels: where we have it recorded, that the Jews surrounded his body, and took it and held it fast, and at length pierced his hands and his feet, and crucified him.

But it may be said, did not Christ himself here abuse the Jews in calling them "dogs" and "wicked" (or 'malignant?')—No! These abuses and revilings are not to be judged according to the words and the sound of them, but according to the mind, intent, and feelings of the person speaking: for that is not a reviling or abuse which is spoken without anger or hatred. Paul also calls the Jews "dogs," "evil workmen," and "enemies of the cross." And Christ also calls the apostles "fools." And in the same way, praises and encomiums are proved to be such, not from the mere words, but from the mind and intention of the speaker. And so here, Christ calls those dogs who, with iniquitous barkings and bitings, accused him before Pilate, and tore him, and delivered him over to the Gentiles to be crucified, even when they knew that they did this solely out of malice. And the madness and fury of this animal is well known as differing from almost all other animals in nature and disposition: and hence it is, that the fury of the Jews and their madness is metaphorically compared to that of dogs.

But let us dwell upon this particular passage somewhat at large, "*They* PIERCED *my hands, and my feet,*" that we may not leave a part of the scripture so important wholly without notice and observation. The Jews here pertinaciously contend that this passage should not be read "*they pierced,*" but, "*like a lion:*" alleging this excuse,—that the verb "*they pierced,*" is written in the Hebrew with a *Caph*, a *Raish*, and a *He*, without an *Aleph*; but that, on the contrary, in this passage the word is written with an *Aleph* between the *Raish* and the *He*, and is read CAARI not CARU; and that CAARI signifies "*like a lion,*" but CARU, "*they pierced.*" Moreover, they affirm, that the word CAARI is found only twice in the whole Bible, in this Psalm, and in Isaiah xxxviii. 13,



“As a lion so will he break all my bones;” and that in all other places the word is written *CARIE* and not *CAARI*: as in Psalm vii. 2, “Lest he tear my soul like a lion” (*CARIE*). And Psalm x. 9, “He lieth in wait secretly as a lion” (*CARIE*); that is, like a lion. And in this same Psalm also above, ver. 13, “as a ramping, and a roaring lion,” (*CARIE*.)

I do not indeed see how they can be forced by the rules of grammar to understand *CAARI* in this passage to signify “*they pierced.*” Most certainly outward appearance stands strongly in favour of them, and not at all for us, as far as outward appearance and grammar are concerned. And it is a hard thing to say that all the copies and books that they have are corrupted in this passage. For, to say that by the application and variation of the points it may be read both *CAARI* and *CARU* is not satisfactory, because it is clear that the points are not to be trusted, as being of recent invention.

We who believe in Christ, and who hold it as a certainty, from the authority of the Gospels, that the whole of this Psalm refers to Christ, may easily be convinced that the passage should here be read “*pierced,*” not “*like a lion.*” For we do not illustrate and prove the things wrought from the mysteries of the scriptures, but, on the contrary, the mysteries of the scriptures from the things wrought: that is, we illustrate the Old Testament by the Gospel; and not, the meaning of the latter from the sense of the former: and thus we make them both look, like the cherubim on each side the mercy-seat, toward Christ. As Jeremiah, xxiii. 20, says, “In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.” And to Moses the Lord said, “Thou shalt see my back parts.” As, therefore, we are fully assured that the hands and the feet of Christ were pierced upon the cross, so, we are not less certain that this Psalm wholly agrees with Christ, and that the rest of the sense wonderfully applies to him, and requires us to read it, “*they pierced;*” and especially so as no grammatical rigour resists such a reading; and therefore, without controversy and without hesitation, we read it “*they pierced.*”

And, first of all, the absurdity itself of the sense which they would give this passage will press the adversaries sufficiently hard. For what is the sense or meaning of 'like a lion my hands and my feet?' And as to their saying, (as they do,) that the verb "have beset" is to be repeated, in this way, 'The counsel of the wicked beset me, as a lion (beset) my hands and my feet,'—they cannot make their escape this way, they will only run the more deeply into the bog of absurdity. How can it be read, 'As a lion (beset) my hands and my feet?' for the scripture always speaks of a lion with an open mouth, and as roaring and seizing, that he may wholly devour. And, what trifling and folly is it to say that the whole body was beset with the counsel of the wicked, and then to add that the hands and the feet were beset also? As if that which beset the whole body did not beset the hands and the feet also.—The same absurdity remains if they make use of any other verb to supply the sense. For whatever verb they use to represent the lion as acting upon the hands and the feet, they must, in common sense, make to apply also to the whole body. Whereas, to our interpretation, no absurdity is attached whatever, but all things most appropriately agree. So that if neither CAARI NOR CARU were written in the text, the very sense would compel us to understand just these verbs.

And then, again, this job will remain in their hands,—they will be forced to admit that this verse refers to any and every signal suffering of these hands and these feet, whoever the sufferer might be. Let them then bring forth Mordecai or Esther,—what suffering did either of those endure in their hands or their feet? Nor does the scripture mention any one just person who endured any signal suffering in his hands or feet. For this suffering must have been different from that of any other part of the body, and peculiar to the hands and feet only, distinctly from the other members of the body. What then was this suffering? They will not say that it was because they were bound with bonds or with fetters, because a lion does not this to the hands and the

feet: nor will they say any thing of the kind in order to make out their metaphor clear. Nor did Esther or Mordecai endure any such thing as this, nor the amputation of their hands or their feet. In a word, they can adduce nothing applicable to a lion, and to hands and feet, which any one of the saints ever suffered. But we have Christ, who is memorably known to have suffered a signal affliction in his hands and his feet; and it is this to which the whole verse, with evident application, refers, and with which it agrees.

Nothing now remains, therefore, but the grammatical difficulty, and this ought to give way to the theological evidence: because facts are not to submit and give way to words, but words to facts: the word must yield to the evident sense, and the letter be subservient to the spirit.

In the first place, CAARE may be read without the points, for CAARIM; that is ‘*piercing*,’ for “*they pierced*:” so as to make it a noun of the plural number, which, in its regimen state, casts away the final *Mem* and the mute, that is the vowel in *e*, according to the nature of the Hebrew language. Then, without any change whatever to the sense, it will read, ‘The counsel of the wicked have enclosed me, piercing (*fodientes, vel fodentium,*) my hands and my feet. And, as in all nouns of this kind, *Vau* is accustomed to be added after the first vowel of the original verb or the point *Holem*, in order that they might be made distinctively different from the verb, and derived from it,—who knows but that the prophet, using a licence of his own, put *Aleph*, instead of *Vau*, on account of the new and singular event? For we read in Isaiah, chap. ix. the same licence as used by that prophet, where he puts the *Mem* final in the middle of the word LEMARBE, contrary to all the custom and usage of the Hebrew language, and that too, on account of the signal and peculiar mystery of the kingdom of Christ, which, though confined and narrow in the things there mentioned, is nevertheless multiplied and opened abroad throughout the whole world.

And now, (if they will still contend with pertinacity,) it would have been of no consequence at all if the

Psalmist had written it CAARI with its own proper letters and points. For as CAARI is an ambiguous word in the Hebrew, and bears the significations of 'buying,' and 'preparing,' and 'piercing,'—who could ever bring these pertinacious and obstinate creatures to admit the signification of 'piercing,' in preference to that of 'buying,' or 'preparing?' Nay, he that is not moved by the events and facts, but will still stick to the letters, might with the greater show of propriety decline the signification of 'piercing;' seeing that it would be less bearable to say that the feet were prepared, or disposed, or bought; in the same way as the hands are said to labour, to be taken, and to find. If, therefore, they would have yielded to us had it been written CAARI, and would have despised all equivocation, on account of the evidence of the facts that took place, they would yield to us now, and come over to our side, and prefer the same truth of the facts that took place to the one elementary letter *Aleph*, upon which they harp, and to which they cleave. But as they now defend their pertinacity and obstinacy by that one letter *Aleph*, so would they have defended themselves by an equivocation had it been written CAARI: for their pertinacity now despises and eludes the most manifest truth.

And what if the prophet inserted *Aleph* on purpose that he might prevent the elusion of equivocation on the one hand, and meet it by absurdity on the other, so that they might not dare to say CAARI; that is, '*like a lion*;' and yet that he might, at the same time, by this signal admonition call them away, by this *Aleph*, from their equivocation, and thus hold them in the middle, shut in between both, so that they should not be able to escape from the true sense and meaning which agrees and harmonizes with the thing that took place in fact. And yet, that which was contrived to prevent their pertinacity,—that very thing their pertinacity perverts in order to support itself.

And who knows but that the Spirit changed this word for this intent, that it might be a hidden mystery until it should be fulfilled; even as he also gave a most

hidden *Title* to the Psalm, which nothing but the accomplishment itself of the thing predicted, nay, which nothing but himself could explain and lay open; and as the whole church has that same Holy Spirit as its hearer, and the same church here reads it "*they pierced,*" and therein agrees with the fact itself that took place, we bid farewell to all the pertinacious, as the Apostle advises us, where he says, Titus iii. 10, 11, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." This, therefore, we do; being sufficiently satisfied, that we have hitherto ever held fast our faith and have defended our reading of the passage, so that they cannot, by any grammatical rigour, nor by any seeming appropriateness of sense, nor by any arguments of facts, compel us to read it otherwise than thus,—"*they pierced.*"

But however, in addition to the advantage that no grammatical arguments can overthrow us, (yea rather, they stand in our favour,) especially the syntactical part of the grammar, we have the plain sense and the fulfilled facts most aptly and harmoniously conspiring together to support us. Whereas they, on the contrary, have *nothing but* the grammatical argument, and that the most rigid and confined; namely, the *orthographical* part only; and this also *uncertain*; for they have only one solitary example out of the whole Bible that stands in their favour, and not accompanied with any illustration of fact whatever; and then again, their sense is most forced and absurd, and without any syntactical propriety to support it.

But however, in a word, there is no question whatever about the sense and meaning of the words, because it is well known to the whole world, even to the wicked.—And here we see the incomparable glory of the spirit of David, who was so thoroughly acquainted with all the sacred particulars concerning Christ, that he even foresaw the very manner of his crucifixion. For in these spiritual evils the Psalmist himself was in no small degree instructed and exercised, so that he was well pre-

pared to foreknow that Christ would suffer the like things, and even greater. But David himself never experienced and went through the having his hands and feet pierced, nor had he ever heard at any time the like suffered by any other, and yet, he so particularly declares it, that no one other place in the scriptures so clearly sets it forth, no, not even the Gospels themselves, together with the whole of the New Testament. And what is the more wonderful, he is at the same time the most clear and the most obscure in the same words. For, before the fact took place, and the prediction was fulfilled, who would have understood that the piercing of the hands and the feet, and the numbering of the bones, had reference to the crucifixion? seeing that, the hands and feet might have been pierced in many other ways besides that of crucifixion, and indeed without any crucifixion at all? But now, after the completion, nothing can appear more appropriately or more clearly described, than his saying, that the hands and the feet of Christ were pierced, and that his bones were numbered or told. For, as Augustine observes, the extension of the body upon the wood could not have been better described.

*Ver. 17.—They told all my bones: they themselves considered and looked upon me.*

The Hebrew has it, ‘I will tell’ (or number): which would be rendered in Latin by the optative or potential; in this way,—I might tell, or, Thou mightest tell, or, Any one might tell, all my bones. For neither the Jews nor any others set themselves the task of numbering all the bones of Christ, nor did he do it himself: but the sense fully manifests itself.

The sense is, therefore, When I was suffering these things they not only did not condole with me, but when there was nothing left that they could do to my ignominy, they exhorted and moved each other to look upon me: and then they feasted and satiated their eyes with staring upon me, leaping, and rejoicing, and exulting over me, because they had now gained the summit of their wicked desires; and this is what David calls, Psalm

lxxxix. 42, "God's making the enemies to rejoice." As Samson also prefigured it when he made sport before the Philistines. That is, that their most cruel rage is hereby manifested in their being delighted with having inflicted this last and extreme of punishments. True it is, therefore, as Solomon says, that the eyes of men are insatiable, even in the venting of rage and fury. And the Hebrew still more fully and powerfully sets forth this feeling, when it says, in its own idiomatic expression, 'They looked upon me.' 'I will look upon his righteousness.' 'Mine eyes shall look upon mine enemies.' Or when the verb is put absolutely, as 'The wicked shall see, and shall be angry.'

Ver. 18.—*They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots.*

It is wonderful why the Evangelists adduce this verse in particular and not the rest, especially as it seems to contain the least and last part of the sufferings; namely, the mere dividing of the garments. And above all the rest, John, who omits the first verse which Matthew and Mark adduce, dwells upon this verse, which seems to be of such little weight, in many words, and indeed cites almost the whole history. Why do they not cite all these passages that refer to the heart, the tongue, and to the other particulars mentioned in the Psalm? But on the other hand, the Evangelists were, perhaps, moved at David's having mentioned this particular injury offered to Christ, while he was silent about others of greater weight and importance; such as, the crown of thorns, the whips, &c. Perhaps they saw in it some particular mystery which they wished to set forth. Or, did they do it to intimate, that as they cited the first and last of these Psalm-prophecies, all the particulars which were fulfilled in Christ should be considered as implied therein? for the first verse contains the greatest sufferings of Christ, and this last verse the least, in comparison with those that preceded.

The meaning is, therefore, that Christ was so delivered into the hands of the wicked, and so utterly

despaired of, that, in their great security, they even insulted his garments and mocked them; so far were they from hoping or expecting any resurrection, and from fearing any vengeance at the hand of God. For I do not think that the soldiers parted his garments for the sake of gain, but as a mockery and ridicule, because they wished to jest on, deride, and laugh at the last thing belonging to one whom they considered undone, destroyed, abolished, and delivered to eternal oblivion, as a poor insignificant mortal, after whose death, they would not permit his garments even to remain as any kind of memorial among their friends.

Ver. 19.—*But do not thou remove far from me thy help, O Lord: look unto my help.*

The Hebrew, according to my judgment, is thus, ‘And thou, O Lord, be not far from me: O Lord, my strength, make haste to my help:’ or, as we have it, Psam lxx. better translated, “Make haste to help me, O Lord.”

In this verse Christ begins to pray and to prophesy; because he has now emerged, and his complaints are now ended, and the agony of his suffering is verging towards victory; and he now speaks with different feelings, being about to sing of the fruits of his sufferings, which is, the conversion of the people to the faith of himself by the spirit of holiness, through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead; as Paul teaches, Rom. i.; by which spirit it is declared, through the Gospel, to be the Son of God, unto the salvation of him that believeth.

In the first place, therefore, he prays for himself, yet not on his own account, but that, by him, the name of God might be declared, and that thus, by his word, the people might be converted unto God, and that God might be glorified in his mercy. He plies this prayer in three verses,—verses conceived with a deep and powerful feeling: the first of which is this, “And thou, O Lord, be not far from me: O, my help, make haste to my help.” He begs that God would be near and make haste to his help: either because help seems afar off to



the feelings of the sufferer, or because he prays not to be left long in death. For, as to all others, God puts them off until the day of judgment; but this man only he hastened to raise from the dead.

We are not here to think that Christ desired to be holpen as to the preservation of his natural life, because he had shewn before that he was brought down to the dust of death, and forsaken in a different way from the ancient fathers. For these are the "strong cries and prayers, with tears," which the Apostle says, Heb. v. that Christ "offered unto him that was able to deliver him from death, and was heard in that he feared." Wherefore, we must collect the cause and force of this prayer from the import of the Psalm, so that we might not be led to consider it like our common prayers, or those of men when they pray in the common necessities of life.

Ver. 19.—*Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword, (framea,) my darling from the paw of the dog.*

"O God" is not in the Hebrew. And my darling had better be rendered 'my lonely, or solitary, one.' For he wishes to say that his soul was lonely and forsaken by all, and that there was no one who sought after him as a friend, or cared for him, or comforted him: as we have it, Psalm cxlii. 4, 'Refuge failed me, and no one cared for my soul: I looked on the right hand, but there was no one who would know me.' That is, solitude is of itself a certain cross, and especially so in such great torments, in which it is most grievous to be immersed without an example and without a companion. And yet, in such a state, every one of us must be, in some suffering or other, and especially in that of death; and we must be brought to cry out with Psalm xxv. 16, "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted."

We have seen, Psalms ix. and xvi. that this *framea* is of Hebrew extraction, and that it is rendered 'sword,' from its cutting power; and we have shewn that it signifies also a persecutor and persecution, on account of

the vehement and cutting spirit with which such rage against the godly and godliness. For the adversaries endeavour with all their power to cut off the godly and godliness from the memory of men. And hence also a mouth is in the scripture attributed to a sword, because by its edge it devours the living: as in Deut. xxxii. 42, “My sword shall devour flesh.” And in many other parts of the scripture, we find that a city was struck with the mouth of the sword, or, that the negligent people were so struck. And thus also Christ here, complaining that he is devoured by the sword, prays to be delivered and to be rescued from death.

And it is the same when he says, “from the paw of the dog;” wherein he has reference to the title of the Psalm, in which he is said to be exposed as a hind is to the dogs. And we continually see the vehement attack which dogs make upon hunted animals: it is so fierce, that, if there be no one to prevent, they wholly kill and devour them. In this expression, therefore, is set forth the ferocity of the Jews against Christ: and thus, as he was alone, he was devoured. And hence it is that he prays to be delivered from the paw of the dog (that is, of dogs,) into whose power, as he complains, he is now fallen.

Ver. 21.—*Save me from the lion's mouth; and my humility from the horns of the unicorns.*

Here he uses the terms sword, (*framea*) dogs, lions, unicorns, by way of forcible expression. And he does not simply mention swords, dogs, lions, and unicorns, but he says that the sword (*framea*) is in his soul, and that the paw of the dog, the mouth of the lion, and the horns of the unicorn, are now raging against him; so that he does not express their mere attempt, but shews that they are now actually executing their rage upon him. He is in the paw of the dog and already torn, seeing that he prays to be delivered from it: and he is now in the mouth of the lion and about to be killed and devoured, seeing that, he prays to be saved from it: and he has already felt the horns of the unicorns, be-

cause he prays to be saved from them. What ferocity, then, must that be which could be expressed only by the word *framea* ('sword') and its nature. Nay, what he felt could not be fully described even by the figures, 'tearing dog,' 'devouring lion,' and 'furious unicorns:' because, that is, there is no hatred more atrocious, no envy more cruel, than that with which Satan impetuously runs upon godliness, and the doctrine and preachers of godliness: for he desires that these things above all others should be destroyed, and he attempts it not in one way only, nor with one burst of fury only, but with continual endeavours; because, he well knows that these are the things that endanger his kingdom in the world.

Concerning the nature of unicorns, I will say more in my Commentary on Psalm xcii. where the figure is used in a good sense, ver. 10, "But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn." In this place, therefore, it will be sufficient for us to know, that this beast is of a ferocity and anger implacable; as are also the roaring lion, and the fierce hound; and, moreover, it is untameable; for no unicorn has ever yet been taken alive; and this we have written, Job xxxix. 9—12, "Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the vallies after thee? Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?" All which things are spoken against the people of the law, in a horrible mystery: for the untameable synagogue is signified by all these things, which is so inflated and puffed up with its own righteous, that it neither serves Christ, nor remains at his crib, nor hears his Word, nor ploughs, nor teaches under him, nor deigns to till the vallies. And although this synagogue has great power and abounds in the works of the law, yet Christ puts no trust in it, nor does he commit himself, nor his affairs, unto it. It neither brings home his seed, nor collects it into his barn, that is, it does nothing for the church, nor unto the increase of the church.

These, therefore, Christ calls unicorns, and here he terms them furious unicorns. Here I might have omitted to observe, that some think that the rhinoceros, or monoceros, or, as we express it in Latin, *naricornis* or *unicornis*, is another species of animal, and different from the unicorn here mentioned; for they say that the rhinoceros has a small horn on the nose, but the unicorn a large one on the forehead: but it is certain that our translator here considered them to be one and the same animal.

“My humility” is not to be understood as signifying here (nor indeed in hardly any other place in the scripture) that humbleness of mind which Paul calls *ταπεινοφροσυνην*, that is, a mind condescending to low, and not aiming at high, things; as the Apostle sets it forth himself, Rom. xii.; but we are to receive it as signifying that affliction and oppression, and in a word, that form and state of humility in which that *ταπεινοφροσυνην* is exercised; which Barnard calls humiliation, not humility: concerning which, we have it said, Psalm ix. 13, “Consider my trouble (or humiliation) which I suffer of them that hate me.”—And though I know not whether the verb in this place should not be read in the second person, “Thou hast humbled me:” that is, thou hast afflicted me, thou hast oppressed me, thou hast made me humiliated; for in these four kinds of persecutions the verb is exactly like that of Psalm li. 8, “My bones shall rejoice: thou hast bruised, (or, thou hast broken:)” for which we read ‘the humbled bones.’

Ver. 22.—*I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I praise thee.*

Who then is this new and admirable declarer and praiser, who had just before declared himself in so many ways killed and devoured, and who now, after his death, and all these things, prophetically says, that he will declare and praise the name of God! For it is certain that he must have died, who said all this about his death, if he is to remain true. And again, it is certain that this same person must declare and praise the name of God, if he is to remain true. Therefore, this same person must

have been both alive and dead at the same time, or, he must declare and praise the name of God after having been raised from the dead. He was not both alive and dead at the same time, for that is impossible and absurd: for Christ was not, and could not be, both a live and a dead person at the same time:—though, he was both a dead Man and a living God at the same time, by a difference of nature in the one same person; so that his person may rightly be said to be alive and dead at the same time. Therefore, Christ here foretold his resurrection, nay rather, the fruits and work of his resurrection, which are the praise and glory of God, because he heard him in his prayers and predictions, and saved him from death: for which new and wonderful thing he now says that he will declare the name of God, and praise him, and give thanks unto him.

And as the Apostle magnifies this verse in his Epistle to the Hebrews, it is not to be meditated upon in a frigid way, because it comprehends the mystery and ministry of the Gospel in a very few words. The mystery is, that he calls them “brethren,” and says he will declare the “name and the praise of God.” And the ministry is, the very office itself of declaring and praising. Here again, therefore, let us learn what it is to preach the Gospel in the church; for we have often said, that the preaching of the New Testament is the preaching of the glory of God: as we have shewn, Psalms viii. and ix. and xix. for “The heavens declare the glory of God, and make his name to be wonderful in the earth.”

But while the name and the works of God are preached, the ignominy and vanity of men are preached also, that all the world might become guilty before God, and that all may be found to come short of the glory of God: as we have it Rom. iii. And this is that mystery which is hidden from the wise and prudent. For the Word of grace, the Word of the cross, is an offence unto the Jews, and foolishness unto the gentiles; because they will not bear to hear the name of God praised and their own condemned at the same time, and to hear the works of God declared and their own reprobated. Here they

blaspheme the name of God in order to praise their own : and they will not submit to the righteousness of God, in order that they may establish their own : and thus, while they hate idols, they commit sacrilege. All this you may easily understand from what has gone before.

And the ministry is, that this Word of Salvation in the name of the Lord is placed, not in letters and books, but in the open and living confession of the voice. So that it is not only known, but is preached abroad instantly, in season and out of season, &c. And so also, Psalm viii. it is said, “ Out of the *mouth*, (not out of the *pen*,) of babes, hast thou perfected strength.” And so again, the heavens do not *think* of, but “ *declare* the glory of God.” Thus, therefore, to come forth publicly and preach openly, and challenge the whole world, is not of human power. And hence it is, that Christ says, “ I will declare,” “ I am he that speaks in you :” as he said also to Moses, Exod. iii. “ I will be that I will be.” For the office of a minister of the Word is not only to reprove the whole world with his voice, but to testify the same by his example, and, for the Word’s sake, to cast behind him riches, glory, life, self-righteousness, and human wisdom, that he may first shew forth in himself that which he preaches and teaches.

The ministry, therefore, is an arduous work, even as the mystery is incredible which is administered by it. And hence it is that Christ takes this work of power upon himself, that no one might presume to take upon him to teach in his own strength, but suffer Christ to “ declare” in him. But however, Christ did declare the name of God to his brethren personally also, as Luke writes Acts i. saying, ‘ that he appeared to them for forty days together, speaking to them of the kingdom of God.’

Away then unto destruction with all the traditions of men, and whatever is not Christ. “ I (says he) will declare :” whereby he has taken away all doctrine which is not of the Gospel. For the true sheep hear the voice of Christ, and not of strangers : and Christ declares nothing but the name and the glory of God : that is, the grace of God, and the sin of men : as John says, xvi. 8,

“ He shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.”

And what he means by saying, “ unto my brethren,” the Apostle shews, Heb. ii. 11, 12, “ For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” For these are the overflowing riches of this mystery;—that we are brethren of and joint heirs with Christ, sons of God, kings of the world, and possessors with Christ of good things that pass all understanding! And who can estimate what it is to be a brother of Christ! For all things are comprehended in that one word!

We have, therefore, in these words three things,—the ministry of the Word, the subject matter of the Word, and the fruit of the Word. The ministry of the Word is the declaring of the Word: the subject matter of the Word is the glory of God: and the fruit of the Word is, to become the brethren of Christ by the Word and by faith in the glory of God: that is, unto him that believeth, the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation; as we have it, Rom. i. Behold, then, the fruits of the resurrection of Christ! This is that Hallelujah, so often mentioned throughout the Psalms and the New Testament. For what is Hallelujah! but praise ye the Lord! And to praise the Lord is, to preach or declare the Gospel. So that Hallelujah! is the true and genuine name and nature of the Gospel! But how many are there who repeat all day long the syllables Hallelujah! who are all the while most bitter enemies to the Gospel! Hallelujah! is an exclamation, not of the rich, not of the great and glorious, not of the mighty and powerful, not of the wise, not of the righteous, not of the living as to this world! but, of the poor, the humble, the weak, the foolish, the sinful, and the dying as to this world. For they are the poor that preach the Gospel; they are sinners that sing and hear Hallelujah! whereas the former sing and hear Hallelujah! but praise themselves all the while.

And that is the same which the following part of the

verse saith, "In the midst of the church will I praise thee:" for the praise of God is the same as the name of God: and "I will praise," indicates the same Christ and the same ministry, as the preceding part of the verse: for what is said concerning him that declareth, is said concerning him that praiseth.—And again, church is the same as brethren. In both, therefore, are set forth the unity, the peace, the love, and the co-heirship with Christ: for the church is flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, and his brother, and sister, and mother. All the things contained in this verse, therefore, are most sweet and most delightful: because the Gospel is a sweet message, but, it is so to those only who are ordained to be made brethren; to all others it is a savour of death unto death.—And now there follows this beautiful consequence.

Verse 23.—*Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye seed of Israel.*

By the Word of the name and praise of God is called forth faith: but all do not obey the Gospel. And above all, the fruit of the Word perishes in those full, self-righteous ones, who are rich in works, and who have not the fear of God before their eyes. And therefore, Christ turns unto them that fear the Lord, who, when they hear that general declaration sounded out by the Gospel, Rom. i. 'All have sinned: there is none righteous: there is none that doeth good, no not one,' are terror-struck at this voice of the Lord, and believe that what they hear is true: and, therefore, being dissatisfied with, and despairing of, themselves, they flee unto the offered mercy that they might be saved. Behold, these are they that fear the Lord, and praise him. But the ungodly, as they do not believe that condemning voice of the Lord, when they hear it declared against all their works and goodness, do not fear nor flee unto mercy: and therefore they praise not God, because they neither feel nor seek his benefits.

Grace, therefore, cannot be declared unless sin be



declared also : for the setting forth of the medicine is a most evident intimation and argument of existing disease ; and the greater and more important the medicine is, the greater the disease is evinced to be. Wherefore in the same proportion as the Gospel exalts the name and praise of God, in the same proportion it magnifies the greatness of our evil and shame : and they that believe not this will laugh both at the physician and their own disease, and thereby appear to themselves wholly sound.

But the prophet exhorts all the seed of Jacob to glorify God ; and that they might do this, he exhorts that all the seed of Israel should fear him ; wherein he hopes that they will believe the Gospel, in order that they might be brought to know themselves, and thus, at length, to fear for their state and condition ; and that then, they might glorify the grace of God, and so, God himself : because, to them especially was this Word and promise of salvation sent, as the apostles in the Acts often told them ; and particularly Paul, where he saith, Acts xiii. 26, “ Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.” And directly afterwards, ver. xxxiii. “ God hath fulfilled the same unto us <sup>their</sup> children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.” But all this they rejected and feared not God ; and therefore they became the bastard children of Abraham, and were <sup>the</sup> house of Jacob and Israel only by carnal generation.

And therefore, the prophet purposely said, “ Ye that fear the Lord ;” and then, “ ye seed of Jacob ;” and then, “ ye seed of Israel ;” thereby intimating and shewing, that those who were without fear, although they may be the carnal seed, could not praise God ; and that no one who did not fear God should boast of being the seed of Jacob and Israel. And by the expression, “ All ye seed of Jacob,” and “ all ye seed of Israel,” he does not mean all the Jews, but those that believed only : for they are truly the seed of Israel.—And what it is to “ fear” God we have shewn before.

Ver. 24.—*For he hath not despised nor abhorred the prayer of the poor, neither hath he hid his face from me : but when I cried unto him, he heard me.*

This is all one verse in the Hebrew, and the pronoun “me” is redundant. Here he sings the cause of the praise of God, and describes the persons to whom the Gospel is profitable; namely, as we before shewed, to the poor, the oppressed, and the miserable. For “Who is a God like unto our God, who, though he dwelleth on high, yet hath respect unto the humble both in heaven and earth!” For it is this that makes God so amiable and laudable, and approachable with all boldness,—that his eyes are ever upon the poor and afflicted; that he is no respecter of persons; but the more low the afflicted are the nearer and more present God is to them; but the proud he knoweth afar off. And hence, in all his commandments, he never enjoins us to have respect unto the rich, the powerful, the great, the honourable: but his commandments are, ‘That we should deal our bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out unto our house; when we see the naked that we cover him, and that we hide not ourselves from our own flesh.’ The all-sweet Lord, even when he had not flesh, yet despised not flesh; and shall we despise our own flesh?

Since, therefore, he has respect unto the humble alone, we must, if we would obtain the grace of the Gospel, become humble; that is, acknowledge and believe that we have come short of the glory of God, and are full of our own ignominy and all evils; and we must be brought to fear in this our poverty. And then, the Lord will not despise such poor ones as these; nay, they shall obtain all that they seek after. For ‘not to despise the prayer of the poor,’ is, to account it well-pleasing, and not to hide his face; that is, to lift up greatly the light of his countenance upon us: though the Hebrew here has it better and more appropriately, ‘And hath not hid his face from me:’ for ‘God’s lifting

up the light of his countenance upon us' is a most frequent expression in the scriptures, and is a peculiar Hebraic idiom, as is also its opposite, 'God's hiding his face.'

Let him, therefore, that desires to be of the seed of Israel, and to rejoice in the grace of the Gospel, become poor, for this is a fixed truth,—our God is one that has respect unto the poor! And observe the fulness and diligence of the prophet. He was not content with having said "will not despise," but adds, "and will not abhor;" and again, "will not turn away his face;" and again, "will hear." And then he adds himself as an example, saying, "When I cried," as our translation has it. As if he had said, 'Behold ye, and learn by my example, who have been made the most vile of all men, and numbered among the wicked;—when I was despised, cast out, rejected, behold! I was held in the highest esteem, and taken up, and heard. Let not this state of things, therefore, after this my encouraging example, frighten you: the Gospel requires a man to be such a character before it will save him. These things, I say, because our weakness requires so much exhortation, that it might not dread being humbled, nor despair when humbled, and thus might, after the bearing of the cross, receive the salvation.'

The Hebrew seems to me to have the absolute *gnomen* here, in this way, 'For he hath not despised nor abhorred the poverty of the poor, nor hidden his face from him: and when he cried unto him he heard him.' Which reading is plainly this,—The Lord is therefore to be praised and feared, because he neither despises nor abhors the poverty, (nor the prayer, because that follows in the next clause), nor that form of humiliation, be it what it may, under which the poor person labour-eth; especially that of ignominy, which is detestable and contemptible in the sight of men.—For we have said above, that ONI is used to signify one under affliction and oppression. Wonderful, therefore, is the sweetness of the Lord, seeing that, in his eyes, that condition of man is precious and well-pleasing, which the world

execrates and nauseates ; and that, he hears such when they cry, while the world considers that he has condemned them.

The whole of this is said, because the Gospel humbles us and brings us to nothing, both before God and before men, so that in both cases we are found sinners and condemned ; but this our acknowledgment of our evil and our being found sinners and condemned, has the effect of bringing us to thirst after the grace of righteousness, in which we carry the cross for the Gospel's sake, both before God and before men. For, before God, we are found sinners on account of ourselves and of the world, with which we have consented and walked : but we are found sinners before the world on account of God and his Gospel, with whom we have begun to consent and walk. Thus our humility exalts us before God, and that exaltation humbles us before men. Blessed, therefore, is this humble person, and blessed is his humility, because he is thus humbled and reduced to shame before men for the Lord's sake, on which account, it is precious in the sight of God. - You see, therefore, the virtues of the Gospel,—that it justifies us before God, and crucifies us before the world : therefore it is the Word of salvation, and the Word of the cross : the Word of wisdom, and the Word of foolishness.

Ver. 25.—*My praise is with thee in the great congregation, I will pay my vows in the sight of them that fear him.*

“ With thee ;” that is, ‘ concerning thee ;’ for thus the Hebrew has it.—Hitherto he had been speaking of the praise of God which is effected by the ministry of the Word : hence he had said, ‘ In the midst of the church will I praise thee and declare thy name.’ And to declare and praise in the midst of the church, is, to speak while others hear : as we have it, Ecclesiasticus xv. 5, “ In the midst of the congregation he shall open his mouth.” Here he is speaking of the service of each person : that is, of the fruit of that faith which is begotten by the Gospel, as the Apostle teaches, Heb.

xiii. 15, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." And Psalm cxvi. 10, David says, 'that he believed and therefore spoke;' but that, on account of this preaching, 'he was sorely afflicted.' And then he adds, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Here, among other things, he says, as he does in the present verse, 'I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people.' And again, ver. 17, "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving." For we have nothing to offer for the unspeakable gift of God in pouring out his Gospel so abundantly upon us, but praise, glory, and thanks.

But what is the meaning of this, where he says he will praise God in the great (or many, as the Hebrew has it,) church? and in the sight of them that fear him? For in the same way, Psalm cxvi. 18, 19, He says, 'that he will pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of his people; in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of Jerusalem.' But may we not praise God and offer our vows in a secret corner, or upon our bed? And moreover, who can be corporally present before all his people, in his great congregation? Wherefore, there is no doubt that he is speaking in the spirit, and concerning that great church in the spirit, or the people of God who are gathered together in the spirit: which is nothing more or less than to praise God in the same faith and in the same spirit: for it is by faith alone and its unity, that the whole people of God, and the whole church, are gathered together in one.

All which things are said in detestation of hypocrisy, and sects who, would sever the church into various parts, and fix it to certain places, persons, and other external things; and who presume to praise God in their own places; that is, with their own peculiar works. Whilst, therefore, any one serves God by any devoted service framed out by himself, and separates himself from the general service of the whole church, (which is faith), and thinks to be justified and saved thereby, does

he not fabricate a church to himself, and pretend to praise God in his small part, and before himself only? These, therefore, are those high places, and groves, and vallies, to which the people of old wandered under the force of their temptations, leaving and neglecting the temple of God and the common worship. Wherefore, to praise God in the great church, or congregation, is, to confess him in the same grace, and not to seek to be justified and saved by our own invented endeavours; that the unity of minds and hearts in faith may remain undivided, though there be various ministrations of works without.

The praise of God, therefore, does not consist in his being praised in visible places: it is not because he is praised at Jerusalem, in the temple, or in this place or that. And so also it is not because the person who praises him is rich or poor, or a priest or a bishop; but the whole turns upon this,—whether the person professing to praise him be a believer in him or not, whosoever or where-soever he may be. For as the time is now come, that the Father is neither worshipped at Jerusalem, nor in that mountain, but all must now worship him in spirit and in truth; so also, he must be praised in spirit and in truth: so that all places, times, and persons, are done away with; that is, all confidence and trust in them. Behold, therefore! to praise God in the great congregation, and before them that fear him, is this,—to praise him in the liberty of the spirit: which knows not any confinement to time, or place, or person, &c.

And he rebukes these presumptuous ones with cutting sharpness, when he says, that he will praise God “in the presence of (or before) them that fear him.” For the ungodly and the sectarians do not fear God. And he explains himself, and shews what he means by “the great congregation.” For where are we to look for those that fear God? At Rome? At Jerusalem? No! in no particular place at all, but any where, where there are men possessed of the Spirit and of faith. And again, when are we to look for them? To-morrow? or, next year? No! but at any time while there exist men possessed of faith and of the Spirit. And

again, to whom are you to look in order to find this church? to the Pope? to the bishop? to the monk? No! but to any one who is possessed of the Spirit and of faith. For the believing are they that fear God, but who have no certain place, time, or person. Thus we see, that the apostles, in like manner, feared nothing so much as lest the communion of the faith should degenerate into various divisions of sects and works: even as it is at this day: which divisions and sects David calls, Psalm v. 10, "The multitude of prevarications (or transgressions,)" ROB PESCHAIM.

This figure of expression, "I will praise thee in the church," appears to me to be very peculiar to David: meaning thereby, 'I will live, or always be, in the church:' because the whole life of the faithful is nothing but a praising of God: as we have it, Psalm civ. "Thou art clothed with praise and honour." And Isaiah xliii. 21, "This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise."

And what are the "vows" here mentioned? Are they those of our religious ones at this day? Are they the self-chosen vows of common works? No, by no means! They are the common vows of the whole church, of the great congregation, and of all who fear God? What then does the church vow? most certainly we have an all-general rule given for all vows, Psalm l. 14, "Offer unto God thanksgiving: and pay thy vows unto the most high." As he says also in the present verse, and in Psalm cxvi. where he couples "vows" with "thanksgiving:" so that "vows" seem to be nothing else but these very praises and thanksgivings themselves: for when we enter into a covenant of faith with God, what do we else but vow unto him praise and glory? For we confess that all our own things are nothing, and declare and protest that it is by his grace alone that we are saved: and hereby we profess and confess ourselves debtors to preach and confess the grace which we have received. We owe, I say, this confession to God,—that we are lost in ourselves, and are saved by his free gift only!

This our debt, therefore, is our vow; which we then pay, when we thus praise God and accuse ourselves; when we glorify him, and take confusion to ourselves; when we justify him and condemn ourselves, that he might be justified in his sayings, when he declares that "All men are liars." And this we do more especially in the time of tribulation, when we are compelled to endure in our own feelings the proof of our accusation and condemnation: for it is then, that we make unto God in the night the confession which is due to him, and say with those of Daniel iii. [Song of the Three Children, ch. i. 4.] "For thou art righteous in all the things that thou hast done unto us." And Psalm lxvi. 12, 13, 14, "We went through fire and water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings, I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble." Behold then, what these burnt-offerings and these vows are, which are brought forth out of tribulation! Heb. xiii. 'Let us offer the fruit of our lips.' And Hosea xiv. 2, "So will we render the calves of our lips." And so again, Daniel iii. [Song of the Three children, ch. i. 17.] "Like as in the burnt-offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs; so let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, that it may please thee." And so in Psalm lxvi. above-mentioned, ver. 15, where he says, he will offer burnt-sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams and bullocks and goats, he does nothing else but offer God praises out of his tribulation: saying, ver. 16, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled on my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But verily God hath heard me: he hath attended to the voice of my prayer." And indeed, the great congregation, and all those who fear God, have no other vows but these.

Ver. 26.—*The poor shall eat and<sup>3</sup>be satisfied: they*



*shall praise the Lord that seek him: their hearts shall live for ever.*

The Hebrew has it, 'your heart shall live for ever.' And by "poor," here he again means those afflicted ones: that is, those evangelical and faithful ones; whom he calls in other places, 'miserable,' in others, 'humble,' in others, 'meek.'

Christ has hitherto said what he would do in his own, and especially in the church in the time of the apostles, and of others who should teach after them. And now, according to my judgment, he is speaking of the increase of the church, and of those who should be brought to hear the Word, both of the Jews and the gentiles, by the ministry of the apostles and the primitive teachers: and he says, that many shall yet be converted out of both people. Because, he is not here speaking of carnal eating; for, as he had before foretold, the preaching and praise of God that should be in the church, and, by means of these, the true food for souls, (that is, the Gospel preached and propagated both by himself and others) he now says, that propagation and preaching should not be in vain, but that there should be sheep who should eat, and hearers who should hear; but that those should be only the humble and the poor: that the word of Christ might stand as a firm truth. "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them," Matt. xi. and Isaiah lx. "He hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor." This verse therefore contains that which Luke often mentions in his Acts, 'that the Word of God grew exceedingly, and that the number of them that believe, increased daily.' And when he says, "Your heart shall live for ever," he plainly intimates himself, that he is speaking of the pasture or food of the Word, which nourishes, not the belly, but the heart.

And now, let us see who are the proper hearers of the Gospel. Christ says, "the poor," the afflicted, the hungry, the desirous of grace, the oppressed with sins, those who are labouring under infirmities. And these, he says, shall be filled and satisfied, and these same shall praise

God. For they seek him of whom they stand in need ; and therefore, they rejoice in him and praise him when they have found him. O happy such ! says Christ, "Your heart shall live for ever !" For the grace and life of God are eternal, and his righteousness endureth for ever and ever ! And what, says he, if your belly shall die, yet your heart shall live by this immortal food of the Word.

And this verse seems to be worded and written most expressly for the people of the Jews, as being a people who were so much accustomed to promises of temporal things, that they expected from God these things only ; that is, the belly and its food, whereas, in those things there is no being satisfied. As if Christ had said, Behold, ye that expect only the belly and its food, and yet can never be satisfied ; the time shall come, when ye shall eat and be satisfied : not, however, carnally, nor as rich men, nor as voluptuous men, as ye have hitherto been, and as ye have insatiably desired to be, but as "poor : " for your food shall be such as shall satisfy you, which is what your carnal food never could do.

And then, they who seek food shall no more murmur against the Lord, but shall praise the Lord : for him they now seek, and not the food which they sought before. And those former characters shall perish, but the latter shall live for ever. Thus, God has destroyed the belly and its food : because, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. And indeed, this expression, "Your heart shall live for ever," has a most forcible reference to the Jews, as before mentioned ; for it is as if he had said, Ye ought willingly to give up these meats of the belly, because your heart is to live for ever.

*Ver. 27.—All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.*

This verse contains a remarkable declaration concerning the conversion of the gentiles. And it most expressively points out the peculiar minds of the gentiles, who were wholly turned away and given up to

idols, and prone to adore all things. And, says Christ, it shall be, that they shall be truly converted; namely, unto the true God, and shall no more worship idols, but shall worship before God, that is, in spirit and in truth.

And although the gentiles were to be converted unto Christ, so that this verse, by a changing of the persons, may seem to be spoken with reference to Christ by the prophet himself; yet, we will not change the person at all as long as we can avoid it, but will still consider that Man to be speaking, who, in the Gospel, speaks just in the same manner concerning the Father, and refers and points all men and all things to him, so that he makes himself almost a mere man; though he draws and refers all things to the Father through himself, and declares that all come unto the Father through him. And so here also he says, that the nations are converted unto God through him, though they are converted unto him also: but he is content with saying only that they are converted through him and his 'declaring,' or preaching.

And I think, that this remembering of the gentiles means this,—that they shall return to their right mind, and shall acknowledge that God whom they have forgotten and despaired of through the ignorance of so many ages. For the gentiles or nations were not only ignorant of God, but had forgotten him altogether by the inveterate blindness of their idolatry. So that in this verb "shall remember" is set forth the exceeding greatness and power of the grace of the Gospel, by which they are brought back, after having been so deeply and inveterately hardened.

Ver. 28.—*For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he shall rule over the nations:*

Paul seems to touch upon this verse when he says, Rom. iii. 29, "Is God the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the gentiles? Yes, of the gentiles also." "For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him," as he saith, Rom. x. And therefore Christ saith here

that the gentiles shall also be converted, because the Lord himself shall reign by himself, for he is Lord of all. And it is not right that the Lord of all should be the Lord of the Jews only, and that they only should be his kingdom. But has he as yet reigned among the Jews? No! Moses and the law have reigned only; for the spirit was not then revealed and manifestly preached. Yet he reigned in some secretly; that is, in a secret kingdom, without the public proclamation of grace and of the Spirit. Therefore, we are not now under the law as an exactor, nor under the spirit of bondage, but under the spirit of liberty, the Lord himself being revealed and reigning in us, the prince of this world being made manifest and cast out who ruled over us before, and who had the power of death: who is now no longer Lord in us.

To rule is more than to create, to make, and to have: for God has all things subject to him, but he does not rule in all: for his kingdom is a sweet and saving dominion, in which the subjects depend and hang upon the will and work of their king. And Christ then rules in us, when we keep holiday from all our own works, and he dwells in us; and no one will doubt that this is solely of grace. And hence it is called the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of heaven; wherein, Christ himself is our king, and we are his peculiar people. But when we serve sin, sin reigns in us, and we are in the kingdom of sin, and of Satan, and captives and exiles from the kingdom of God, and we pollute the sabbath of the Lord by our own works without intermission.

Therefore, the exultation contained in the present verse is this,—“The kingdom is the Lord’s, and the Lord is among the gentiles;” as we have it, Psalm xcvi. 1, “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.” As if he had said, The nations shall be converted, for the devil shall be cast out, sin shall be destroyed in the world, and a king shall reign in righteousness and wisdom: and this shall be openly taught and wrought by the Gospel.

Ver. 29.—*All the fat upon the earth have eaten and worshipped. All they that go down into the earth, shall bow before him : and my soul shall live to him.*

The Hebrew is thus : ‘ All the fat of the earth have eaten and worshipped : all they that go down into the earth shall bend the knee before him : and his soul shall not live.’

It appears to me that this verse, with the two following, is given as a kind of conclusion or summary of the whole, and yet it seems that this is purposely done in an obscure and elliptic way, wherein much is omitted and much implied, for there is much circumlocution, many figures, and also an exchange of persons, and a disturbance of regular order and punctuation : so that it requires a great deal of labour to find out the real meaning, and then, perhaps, there will be a doubt remaining whether we have attained unto it after all. . But yet, let us try and see what we can do.—Let us not be moved by the punctuation here ; nor let us admit any change of persons, but let us consider that it is Christ still speaking unto the end of the Psalm ; for we often find him in the Gospel speaking of himself in the third person ; as in John iii. 16, “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” And Matt. xxiii. 8, ‘ But be ye not called Rabbi : for one is your Master, even Christ, who is in heaven.’ And again, John iii. 13, “ And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” And so in this place he does not say, ‘ And *my* soul shall not live,’ and ‘ A seed shall serve *me*,’ but he says, “ And *his* soul shall not live,” and “ A seed shall serve *him*.”

The first part of the verse, therefore, must be considered as a concluding summary, or (as we call it) a summing up of the whole. For he had said that the Jews and gentiles should be converted and should worship : and here, enlarging a little upon these declarations, he says, Yea, and then shall cease all distinctions and respect of persons : so that in Christ there shall be no more respect of persons, neither Greek nor Jew, neither

master nor servant, neither rich nor poor, neither male nor female, neither Scythian nor barbarian, neither great nor small; but all shall be one in Christ Jesus, all shall serve one "shoulder" and one God, in one faith and one Gospel, without any difference.—And what this eating and worshipping are, we have shewn before; namely, that "they (the Jews) have eaten" and fed upon the Word; for, in the verb "they have worshipped," he intends more particularly the Greeks, as I have observed. But here, he joins both, though before confused into one; and means also, that they have each of them both eaten and worshipped: so that there is no distinction between the Jews and the gentiles, according to the testimony of the Apostle, for all are one by the universal unity above mentioned. As if he had said, both Jews and gentiles, as well those whom I had before said should 'eat,' as those whom I said should 'worship,' shall be without difference, and shall eat and worship: that is, they shall be eaters, hearers, worshippers, and adorers of God.

And that is the same which now follows, "they shall fall down before him," or 'shall bow their knee before him;' that is, they shall remain before him with their knees upon the earth; whereby is signified the custom, or manner, or form or position of adoration. And "the fat of the earth" signifies, figuratively, those that are of a more exalted external appearance, such as the opulent, the powerful, the noble, the honourable, the brave, the beautiful, the wise, the self-righteous, and the like. For so we have it, Psalm xvii. "inclosed in their own fat," upon which we have before spoken. And Deut. xxxii. 15, Jeshurun is said 'to be waxed fat, and grown thick, and covered with fatness.' Wherefore, "the fat of the earth" is whatever is high or great in the world, or specious in the eyes of men. But the Lord has put no difference between these and others, but he catches in his net great fish with small, and creeping things innumerable, which move about in the great and spacious sea of this world.

"All they that descend into the dust." I do not con-

sider that David here speaks of the dead, or of the mortal, as some will have it, but I think it is a circumlocution to signify a mean form, or condition, or person; in opposition to the former expression, "the fat of the earth." So that it signifies that there is no person or condition so vile and abject which God has not honoured, and will not honour, with his grace and Gospel; to the end that all the contempt of the despising, and all the terror of the terrible, might be done away with; that the lion might lie down with the calf and the sheep, the leopard with the kid, and the wolf with the lamb, and that a little child might lead them; as Isaiah, xi. foretold should be the case. "For who hath made thee to differ? (saith Paul, 1 Cor. iv. to those who wished to set aside this equality,) and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" Thus, while God reigns in us through Christ, all things are his and nothing ours, so that no one has more or less than another: but, as it is said concerning those that gathered the manna, 2 Cor. viii. 15, "He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack:" for all things of all belong to all on account of the one faith, one Word, one kingdom, one Lord.

And that this 'descending into the dust' signifies that low, and abject, and afflicted condition, or person, as I have mentioned, is manifest from Isaiah xlvi. 1, "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate." What is this but the humiliation of the greatness of Babylon foretold? As we have it again, Lam. iii. 29, "He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there might be hope." And Job, vii. says, that his flesh was clothed with the filth of the earth. And Psalm vii. David would suffer his honour to be laid in the dust; that is, brought to nothing. And so Paul, 1 Cor. i. that things which 'were not,' were called, and the foolish and weak, that God might by them 'bring to nought the things that are;' and therefore he saith,

the dust of death, because such are, as it were, dead, and as if they were lying in the dust. And Psalm cxiii. 7, 8, it is said, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." And again, in another place, "He putteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble," &c. that he might make all equal; and that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. Thus there is one bread, and we are all one body, and partake of the same bread and of the same cup.

"And his soul shall not live." What "*his*" is here intended? most certainly, none other than the Lord's himself; concerning whom he had said just before, "they shall fall down before him;" for the order of the words and context will not allow us to understand it of any one else. And this is that mystery which David wished to indicate, as being wrapped up and enfolded in these words; so that it might be enfolded but not unfolded. You see, then, that Christ is here speaking of himself in the third person, and setting forth in the one same expression the mysteries both of his divinity and his resurrection. For if his soul was to die, therefore he had a soul (or life) that was capable of dying; and these things must be spoken of a man that was capable of dying, and that should die; this no one can doubt or gainsay. And the pronoun "*his*" can refer to no one but that Lord spoken of before in what precedes, whom the Jews and gentiles should "serve" as the true God. You see, therefore, with what plain, open, and beautiful words Christ has here declared himself to be both truly man, capable of dying, and immortal God: so that the God spoken of in this verse cannot possibly be any other than that God who should die, and was at once man, capable of dying, and immortal God; that is, God and man in the one same person.

Behold this is one part of the concluding summary of this Psalm. As if he had said, the sum total of what I intend in this Psalm is this,—the true God, who is also truly Man, shall die and shall suffer those things



which I have foretold concerning him ; and then those things shall follow his passion which I have predicted shall follow it. And David has added this last clause to this ver. 29, which would perhaps have better begun the succeeding verse ; but a mystery so great was thus to be involved !

Ver. 30.—*And a seed shall serve him : they shall account unto the Lord for a generation.*

Ver. 31.—*They shall come and shall declare his righteousness, a people having been born, for he hath done it.*

He had said before that his soul (that is, his life,) should die. Here he says that there should be a seed that should serve him. But, they could not serve one that was dead, nor could he reign when dead ! For who would serve a dead person ? Therefore, it must of necessity follow, that he should die and rise again, in order that this seed might serve him. And as, when he died, he was taken away out of the land of the living, (as we have it Isaiah liii. 8, “ He was cut off out of the land of the living ;”) so, it was necessary that he should so rise from the dead, as to die no more, and to be no more capable of death. And hence, his kingdom was not to be perishable or temporal, because his soul was not to live in this life, but to be taken out of this life : for he says, “ And his soul shall not live ;” which refers to and signifies this animal life : and Paul speaks in the same way, when he says, 1 Cor. xv. 45, “ The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” And he calls the one life natural and the body natural, and the other life spiritual and the body spiritual.

And so here it is said, that Christ should so die ‘ that his soul should not live :’ that is, should not live an animal life. He did not think it proper to say plainly that he should die, but he used those words and expressions which would the most appropriately set the matter forth ; that is, that Christ should so die, that his soul should live no more ; that is, his animal life should not live any more by food, clothing, and breathing, &c.

and amid the various other necessities of life. He has, therefore, a soul, or natural life, and is Man, (it is here said,) but that soul shall not live; in order that he may have a seed that should serve him, and in whom he might reign. Hence it follows, that he is also spiritual and shall live; which cannot be, unless his natural body die, and his spiritual body rise again and live.

From these things therefore it farther follows, that he is God; because, this 'serving' does not accord with a mere man, nor is the 'kingdom' such as to accord with a mere man. Hence it of necessity follows also, that this service is not animal, seeing that he himself is not animal or natural, and therefore does not want such a service. This service, therefore, must be in the spirit, and all the tumultuous noise and external service of the synagogue must cease and give way to it. And again, this also follows,—that this "seed" is not animal or natural. For he did not say, a people shall serve him, but "a seed shall serve him:" thereby striking at, and doing away with, all the boasting of the carnal seed of Abraham, and introducing the mention of a new seed which he himself should beget through the Gospel by the Spirit. This Man therefore shall be a new patriarch, (so to speak,) the author of anew seed, of a new generation, of a new service, of a new kingdom, such as the world never knew before.

So if, as it is said, Isaiah liii. he shall lay down his life for sin, and shall see a long seed, how can all that be if he remains dead? How can he beget all this seed when dead? Therefore this patriarch (so to speak) is not like all the former patriarchs. They all died leaving their seed behind them, which seed did not serve them when they were dead. But this patriarch will not die and leave his seed behind him, but will be present with them, present for ever, and they living shall serve him, living for ever; but not in this mortal and animal life. For to the other patriarchs he always said, "And to thy seed *after* thee." But to this one it is said, 'To thy seed *with* thee,' which shall not remain after thee, but shall be always with thee, so that they shall also serve thee.

“They shall account unto the Lord for a generation.” The verb “shall account” is here to be taken impersonally, in my opinion, after the manner of the Hebrew language, for, ‘it shall be accounted,’ or ‘there shall be talking about its being so;’ as we have it Gen. x. 9, “Concerning this man there went out a proverb, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord:” where the Hebrew has it, ‘And he said, even as Nimrod,’ &c. that is, some one said, or it was said.

But the whole expression here is Hebraic: ‘He shall account (or say, or tell) unto the Lord for a generation:’ that is, he shall preach, and with this preaching or proclaiming he shall proclaim; and he shall proclaim thus,—that the Lord pertains unto this generation; or, that this is a generation unto him.—Which is wonderful in our eyes, that God, like unto men, should have a generation of people! And he says once only, in the singular number, “a generation:” whereas, the expression in all other cases is doubled, ‘from generation to generation.’ But this is so said on this account; because, in the carnal seed, one generation passes away and another comes, and there is a succession of them and they continue not. But this is a generation where the first do not pass away and give place to the next; but they are all gathered together into one generation; because it is a generation that is spiritual and eternal.

“They shall come and shall declare his righteousness:” that is, the righteousness of faith, not the righteousness of works and of the law; that is, this seed and this generation of his shall declare it, for this shall be their service, as Peter says, 1 Epist. ii. “But ye are a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” For they shall not declare of this King any thing respecting the glory of this world, as the scriptures declare concerning Solomon: but they shall proclaim his righteousness as being this King, the conqueror of sin and death, and the author of eternal blessings.

And whence shall they come, and to what place

shall they come?—They shall proceed from the sight of, and from before, this King, and shall enter into the world, and shall there declare that righteousness openly by which they live before him secretly.

This is thus spoken, lest this generation here predicted should be thought hereafter never to have existed, because it is spiritual. But it shall be spiritual, saith he, and yet it shall be in the world. Yet they shall not be known by any sign but the ministry of the Word; for every other distinction of person shall be taken away. They shall come with the feet of the Gospel of peace, and you shall hear their voice but shall not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; for it is the Spirit that breathes from them, and their external persons have nothing to do with it; for he breathes freely, and whithersoever he will.

“A people being born.” What is this? What people is there that is not born? According to my apprehensions I think this is said, for this reason,—because the people of other kings are formed by laws, by customs, and by manners; by which, however, you can never move a man to true righteousness: it is only a fable of righteousness, and a mere theatrical scene or representation. For even the law of Moses could form the people of the Jews unto nothing but unto hypocrisy. But the people of this King are not formed by laws to make up an external appearance, but they are begotten by water and by the Spirit unto a new creature of truth. This is the power and truth of righteousness without its specious outside shew, which is declared in the Spirit. For that which is “born” is wholly changed and made a new thing: as Christ saith, John iii. 3, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Therefore, it is unto this people that is “born” that the Word of the righteousness of God is given; by which Word it is that they are “born” and preserved, and not by any outward appearance but by truth: the man is righteous in the spirit and yet living in the flesh.

“Since he has done it.” This is spoken concerning Christ the King in this sense, if I am not mistaken,—

to shew that all these things are done and come to pass, *because* he does them. As if he had said, He said many things by the law before, and promised many things, but nothing was wrought (so to speak). The time therefore shall come, that he shall send forth the “rod of his strength,” and shall give a voice of power to his Word, and shall send forth such a Word, as shall be mighty (as James saith) to beget us to be his creatures, and to heal our souls: and then, he shall be not only the speaker but the doer. As Isaiah lii. 6, “Therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.” He gave the law before, but there was no one that could do it: he then came and gave the Gospel, by which he doeth all things.

Behold, these two verses, therefore, and mark with what a comprehensive brevity, and in what a wonderful enfolding and wrapping up they embrace all the mysteries of Christ concerning his divinity, his resurrection, his kingdom, his people, his Gospel, his righteousness, and his salvation; so much so, that I have never met with any verse like it as yet throughout the whole scripture.

## CONCLUSION

### TO THE FIRST TWENTY-TWO PSALMS.

Here I have thought it proper to pitch my tent, and rest. And, as I see these Commentaries of mine to be caught up and hurried away to the presses, while I wished them to remain for ever unseen by the public, there are many things in them with which I am not contented. I beg of the godly reader, therefore, that he will read the whole with the greatest care and judgment: not that I am conscious to myself, that I have taught any thing in them that is corrupt or contrary to the truth; for with the sense and doctrine throughout I am quite satisfied; but all things did not come into my mind in their place just as I wished. I have erred now and then, also, in the Hebrew language: for as I was sometimes much occupied and employed in various ways by various engagements, I could not devote to it

the whole of my mind and time. I do not, however, excuse myself on account of the difficulty of the Work; nor because of any conscious deficiency in my knowledge of the Hebrew, or in my ability for the undertaking: for if that had been the case, you would justly say, Why did I not decline undertaking it altogether? Nor do I comfort myself, by the example of others and their defects; though, perhaps, that is the most honourable way of pleading excuse. But, what I have earnestly panted for, is, to give the true, pure, and genuine sense in each respective passage; and if I have been enabled to do this in some parts, I do not mind being called rash, erroneous, and unlearned, in some other places, in comparison with these.

And there are many other defects, which I, perhaps, do not see nor know: such as the errors of copyists, printers, &c. In a word, the whole Commentary would have pleased me better, had it first been thoroughly revised by me: for prolixity and verbosity are great faults in it. But however, there is in it something of spiritual teaching and revelation; for which, let him that is godly give thanks unto our Lord Jesus Christ; who is our light, and who is blessed for ever! AMEN!

THE END OF THE COMMENTARY ON THE  
TWENTY-TWO PSALMS.

THE  
SEPARATE AND PARTICULAR  
C O M M E N T A R Y  
OF  
**Martin Luther**  
UPON  
THE SECOND PSALM.





## EPISTLE DEDICATORY.



VITUS THEODORUS, OF NORBURG, TO THAT MOST  
EXCELLENT MAN GEORGE VOGLER, OF EMINENT  
VIRTUE, GREETING.

THE Holy Spirit commandeth, by the exhortation of Paul, not only Timothy, but all rulers and teachers of the church, nay, all those who have rightly received the doctrine of the Gospel, to guard and defend the Gospel with a sound faith, as a deposit and treasure of the greatest worth, and to transmit it uncorrupt to posterity. And there ought to be in every father of a family, a greater concern about leaving the Gospel to his children, than about leaving them a fortune. And a godly father of a family will consider this to be the best inheritance he can leave,—to sow in the minds of his children sentiments of truth, and to endeavour to confirm them by repeated exercises, and to furnish his own family and others with the all-useful scriptures, that his posterity may be brought truly to know, call upon, and glorify God! For it was for this very end that the human race was created and propagated, that we might be the temples of God, that God might be truly acknowledged by us, and that his goodness might be seen and observed; nay, that he might set his own goodness before us to be enjoyed, and that he might adorn us with his own light, his own wisdom, and his own righteousness.

But these blessings will be bestowed on no one, but on him that reads, hears, learns, embraces, and keeps

these sacred pages of the prophets and apostles, which are despised by the Epicureans of this world. These pages God will have to be kept as monitors, witnesses, and pledges, of his will: and it is by and through the voice of these, that he will descend into the hearts of these his learners, and create in them a new light and a new righteousness.

Wherefore, it ought to be the especial care of all, that all these books of the prophets and apostles perish not, nor be corrupted; but that they exist in their purity, be in the hands of all, be read, be heard, be understood, be loved, and that they rule our minds in calling upon God, and our whole life. But since these books are proudly contemned by the profane multitude, and many in those very assemblies, who arrogate to themselves the name of 'The church of God,' love, in the place of these scriptures, the opinions of the Epicureans, or foul superstitions;—therefore, even the prophet Isaiah begs of God, that he would not suffer the pure, true, and uncorrupt doctrine to be abolished, but that he would still keep it among some.

For thus the prophet prays in his 8th chapter and 16th verse, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. I will wait upon the Lord," &c. As if he had said, 'I see that sad times of darkness and a forgetfulness of the true doctrine will come on, and confusions and opinions concerning God, and fanatical madneses. Our sermons and discourses, though drawn out of the bosom of the eternal God, will be most audaciously fought against and torn in pieces. The Sadducees will utterly reject them and laugh at them, and will attempt to take entirely out of the way the doctrine concerning an immortality. But, by thine unmeasurable mercy, and according to thy promises, there shall still be a church of thine own, begotten and continued among these our hearers, who shall be guardians and defenders of the true doctrine, and who shall be (if I may so call them) thy school and thy library, such as Zachariah, Simeon, Elizabeth, Mary, and many others. On these our disciples, who read and learn these our writings, do thou, I pray

thee, put thy seal: that is, do thou by thy Holy Spirit light up thine own light in their minds; and turn them to true prayer and calling upon thee; and never suffer thine own doctrine to be extinguished, but let there always be a company left which shall call upon thee and glorify thee; and be not moved to wrath by the insult and dishonour put upon thee, because the remaining and greatest part of the human race are partly become Epicureans and partly carried away by idol madness.'

In this prayer of Isaiah you may see an exact picture of our present times. And how often have I stood on the banks of the Danube at Ratisbon, and looked at its deep and impetuous stream, and wept and thought, that, if I could even pour out as many tears as that rapid flood rolled down waters, I could not exhaust the burden of grief that I continually carry about with me, on account of the dispersed and lacerated condition of the church! And that gigantic ferocity increases every where, and those defenders of foul superstitions paint out their idols with new colours every day; so that their errors are continually confirmed in many. And yet, there is still, and ever shall be, some remaining church of God, as guardians and defenders of the writings of the apostles and prophets, holding firmly their native, simple, and plain meaning, and not dallying with any corruptions.

As, therefore, it is manifest, that in the midst of such a variety of opinions and wills, there shall yet still remain a company belonging to God that shall keep and defend the Gospel, let this be every one's care;—that he wisely choose the doctrine he holds by; that he seek these teachers, these prophets, and apostles, and read them, hear them, and learn them; and that he strive to be one of that company, for whom Isaiah prayed, when he said, "Bind up the testimony among my disciples." Let him consult that company of prophets and know what is their meaning; let him see what godly commentators have said in their interpretations; let him compare together those interpretations which differ from each other, and let him choose those which the circumstances them-

selves prove to come the nearest to the fountain head ; and this will not be at all difficult to decide, where the judgment is godly, candid, and free from calumny and prejudice. And then, let him add that prayer of the prophet, and beg of God, both for himself and others, that we may be guided by his divine light, and that he would impress his seal upon our minds, that we err not from the true sense and meaning. And let the learned also take the especial care upon them of collecting godly and useful writings, that posterity may have true and godly interpretations and commentaries, and may know also from whence they come and from whom they receive them.

It was thus that the company of the Levites preserved the writings and monuments of Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, and the others ; and in the same manner, the disciples kept and defended the writings of the apostles, and testified from whence they received their doctrines.—But afterwards, when the study of letters was neglected, and the bishops contended and fought for authority and power, new rites and books were introduced and received, without any proper selection and without any testimonies.—Thus, who can now say by whom that diabolical error of praying for the dead was introduced ?

As therefore circumstances of fact prove, that some ages ago the purity of the old and true doctrine was polluted, because many impostors scattered up and down their depraved writings ; and as many impure rites also corrupted the ancient purity when buried under those impositions, let us now, since God by his infinite goodness has again lighted up the light of the Gospel, be more wary and careful : let us collect and gather up all good writings, and let us shew, for the satisfaction of posterity, from what authors they come, and upon what testimonies they receive them.

It is with this design that I have published many of the Commentaries of MARTIN LUTHER, after they had all been revised and corrected by the author himself. And that no one might be left in doubt concerning the fidelity

of these publications and the authenticity of their contents, let him bear in mind that they have all been edited by me from the press of the college at Wittemberg, up to this year of our Lord 1546. And as I shall hereafter, by God's help, publish more of the monuments he has left behind him, I will do it with that fidelity which I owe as a duty to the public. I will not, however, send forth those editions alone, but I will join to myself, as helpers, those learned and valuable men, Caspar Cruciger and George Rorary, to be as judges and witnesses.

Luther has left us no mean or common deposit and treasure,—namely, the doctrine of the church, purged and purified from the pollutions with which it had been for ages defiled and obscured; and this doctrine and treasure God would have us guard and preserve with a good faith. And though many atheists, and many carried away with fanaticisms and superstitions, judge otherwise, and complain that Luther's doctrine sowed the seeds of various discord, and were inextricable labyrinths, yet, all the godly, who know the conflicts of repentance, and what it is truly to call upon God, know and acknowledge, that, by the voice of Luther commissioned from above, many gross errors were amended which had hitherto stuck to the church, and that the true and saving doctrine was brought to light.

But what calling upon God can there be in a mind that flees from God? What consolation under real terrors can there be to a mind that feels nothing but the wrath of God? If men know nothing of the doctrine of faith, which alone struggles against these doubts and overcomes these fears and horrors, and if they hold fast that opinion that is of the law, 'God will receive thee when thou art become worthy,'—if the mind, I say, knows nothing more than this, it must horribly roar against God: and, for many ages, the monks taught that men must remain in this state of fear and doubt.—It was at this error that Luther especially struck, and shewed, that it was the command of God, that those who were terrified with the feeling sense of the wrath of God against sin, should assure themselves that they

would certainly be received into grace freely for the sake of the Son of God, the Mediator, and that they should approach God in this faith and call upon him; and that all fleeing from God on account of our unworthiness should be stopped, and the mind called back to go and seek his face.

All the godly know that this is the doctrine that is necessary for the church. And now, for the unfolding of this doctrine, how many things are necessary? How many things does it embrace? It comprehends the difference between the law and the Gospel, and the whole doctrine of repentance. And then, in the explication of each particular, it is necessary to illustrate and set forth all the matter connected with it. And hence, Luther has shewn how the works commanded in the law of God are to be distinguished from all those rites and ceremonies which have been most audaciously invented and introduced by human wisdom. And since it is well known to us, that these and many other points of doctrine have been rightly and truly set forth by Luther, it is the duty of the godly not to cast away such gifts of God, but to guard and preserve carefully all his labours, and hand them down, and commend them to posterity.

In this second Psalm we have a sermon concerning faith, "Blessed are all they that trust in him!" Here, if you follow the expositions of the monks, they will say, 'If, or when, you are worthy, trust in him.' But this interpretation frightens back a fearful and trembling mind, that feels its own unworthiness, and prevents it from fleeing to the Son of God. But when such a trembling one knows, that is given for a *consolation*, and unto this *very end*, that we might *not* flee from God, nor be driven back on account of our sense of unworthiness; but that we might know, that we shall be received of God for a Mediator's sake, and that it is the especial command of God that we believe this, and that we assure ourselves that such is the will of God towards us, —when, I say, we hear the Psalm expounded thus, then it is intelligible, clear, and sweet!

But I have often heard the monks, when speaking of

these matters before the people, deliver such false and inexplicable stuff, that neither the people that heard them nor they themselves knew what it meant: so that their preaching seemed exactly to answer that which is described in that notable Greek line:

*Τοῖα γε τοι τυφλὸς παρὰ κωφῶν ἔοικε λαλῆσαι.*

'Tis like as if a blind man would explain,  
To one that's deaf, what he had never seen.

These expositions and explanations, therefore, which have been opened up to us by God himself, through the voice of Luther, let us love and embrace.

And I have dedicated this labour of Luther to you, my friend George, because I know that you favour all godly labours, and have a great desire that all the monuments which Luther has left us should be handed safely down to posterity. I hope, therefore, that our endeavours and offering will be acceptable to you. In return for which, what I beg you to do for the church, is, that you would join your prayers with mine, and with those of other godly persons, and would with us pray unto God, that he would continue to gather to himself a church in these parts of the world, and that he would rule and govern it himself as he collects it, help it in the holding of the true doctrine, keep and guard our political governments, (which are, as it were, the earthly dwelling-places of the church of God,) and protect its discipline: for we know, that all these highest of blessings must be sought and expected from God only; and yet, we know also, that our prayers and desires shall not be in vain. And although many, who know nothing of God and of the government of his church, think the same as he did, who says in Plato's work, *τύλαι παντῶν ἀρίπτονται παντοίως νομοθετοῦσι*, 'The various laws in states arise from various fortunes and accidents:' yet, we know, that God himself is the guardian and keeper of his church, and that he will defend all political governments for his church's sake.

Therefore, O Almighty and living God, the eternal and only Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the maker and helper of all things, the author of thy church, together with thy co-eternal Son our Lord Jesus Christ and thy Holy Spirit, by the pouring out of the Comforter upon the apostles; Thou only good, wise, merciful, powerful, pure, true, and all free God, and Judge of all, I pray, that, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who was crucified for us and raised again, thy "Word" and thy "image," whom by thy wonderful counsel thou willedst to come a sacrifice for us, mediatorial and expiatory, thou wouldst have mercy upon us who call upon thee, that thou wouldst govern us by thy Holy Spirit, that thou wouldst gather to thyself in these parts of the world a church that shall praise thee through an eternal life, and that thou wouldst defend all political governments which are thy church's earthly dwelling-places. Amen.

Dated, A. D. 1546, the day on which the Son of God, 1547 years ago, took upon him human nature in the womb of the virgin; and on which day, 5508 years before, as it is supposed, Adam was made.

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P R E F A C E

OF

**Martin Luther**

TO THE

SECOND PSALM.

OUR situation who serve the church and hold the office of teaching is, indeed, very inconsiderable and unimportant, if you compare it humanly with other professions, or if you follow the opinion of the world. For, in return for our labour, we generally get hatred; and we are not only proudly despised, but also suffer much of hunger and various necessities: whereas, others abound in all luxuries and are held in the highest esteem. For this reason, we find that our brighter geniuses will have nothing to do with this our occupation, but follow those arts and pursuits which are accompanied with gain and dignity.

But if you consider this matter in its proper light, you will find, that a true divine, although miserable and despised, is in a better state and condition than any of the masters of other professions. For when the divine performs his office, he not only renders a most essential service to his neighbour, and a service that far excels all the offices of all other men put together, how shining, and showy, and apparently useful soever they may be, but he also offers the most pleasing of all sacrifices unto God who is in heaven; and such an one is most truly called, and is, a priest of the Most High! For all that a true divine performs in the church, tends to diffuse the knowledge of God, and to promote the salvation of men.

Since, therefore, by the divine blessing and interposition, the abomination of those impious sacrifices of the papists, the masses, are abolished among us, which the ungodly Pope with his followers and teachers set off with

the name of the greatest sacrifice ; and since the true worship of God is now restored, namely, the preaching of the Word, whereby God is truly known and honoured ; since, I say, these blessings surround us, I also, as one out of the number of the priests of God, had a desire to take in hand and expound the SECOND PSALM : and that, not only that I might teach you and learn myself, but that I might thereby offer unto God the most acceptable of all sacrifices ! For why should I not so denominate this service which I perform for the sake of the church of Christ, when the whole end and aim of it, are, the glory of God, and the salvation of men, and when it is commanded in the first and second commandment ? For how can we make use of the name of God in a more holy way, than when we instruct ourselves and others by the Word of God ? How can we more profitably employ our time, or more truly keep holy the sabbath day, than by endeavouring to alleviate the most certain and most heavy perils of these our times, by the consolations of the scriptures ?

Let us then unite together in our devotions and our labours ; and do you by your hearing, and let me by my teaching, according as our vocation is, offer this worship unto God, which he every where demands of us ; that we also by this same service, and by thus exercising ourselves in this part of God's Word, may have our faith confirmed ; and that the glory of God may be spread abroad. This is the sacrifice that is grateful and acceptable unto God ! The Almighty is more pleased and taken with these " calves of our lips," (as the prophet speaks) than with all self-formed works, how magnificent and difficult soever they may be. It becomes us, therefore, to enter upon such services, which are so holy, so necessary, and so useful, with a glad and willing mind : for we are certain, that while we are performing these services, we are not only not committing sin, but engaged in the most holy of all works, which are followed by fruits that are certain, and not only so, but eternal !

# COMMENTARY

ON THE

## S E C O N D P S A L M,

Delivered publicly, A. D. 1532, in the month of March.

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### INTRODUCTION.

THIS Second Psalm, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, moved the first prayers and the first offering of thanks unto God in the church of the New Testament. For the disciples having gathered themselves together, sang and praised God and prayed; so that, among so many dangers, and in the midst of such fury of their adversaries, their minds were strengthened, and they preached the Word with all boldness.

That part of the Acts, therefore, proves that this Psalm has in it some peculiar excellence; because, the apostles, being immediately before filled with the Holy Spirit, and experiencing now their first trials and their first conflicts, caught hold of this Psalm in their prayers, and with it consoled and fortified themselves against all the violence of their enemies. And this same Psalm is peculiarly needful to us, in these present times, on two accounts. For we are attacked both with force and fraud; and are, moreover, assaulted with various offences and numberless evils, by Satan and the world, on account of the Word of God!

The Psalm is prophetic: for which we also will praise God, and will, with the apostles, pray against the fury of the world: and we will take also with the apostles that certain consolation which the Psalm affords in such abundance, and which it sets forth in such excellent

words and declarations. For David handles the matter contained in this Psalm on purpose to comfort and teach the church concerning the kingdom of Christ, which shall be propagated and extended in defiance of all the powers of the world and of the air. Wherefore, its especial design is, to confirm the article concerning the New Testament, or the kingdom of Christ, and to shew, that it is a spiritual kingdom; that Christ is an eternal King, and will have no successor; that he is also Priest to atone for and teach his church; nay, that he is by nature God, and has in himself, to bestow upon us, eternal righteousness and wisdom. When these things are rightly set forth and explained, they are full of consolation.

And yet, the prophet shews that this kingdom is, in appearance, so weak, that it seems as if it would fall every moment. For it has no strength or foundation that is visible, or such as we see in the kingdoms of the world, which principally consists of power, wealth, multitudes of people, and extent of territories. This kingdom being destitute of all such supports, and without all such foundation, hangs upon the Word only, like a drop of water hanging to a bucket.

These are the things that the present Psalm principally contains: therefore, it is most useful for the instruction of the church, that we might learn and know the nature of, and the circumstances relative to, this kingdom: what kind of a King Christ is, and when, and where, and how, he will administer this kingdom: and also, what things are agreeable to this kingdom, and what things are contrary to it: and again, what will be the fruits and what the effects of it: what its appearance will be in the sight of the world, and what it is in the spirit and in the sight of God. They that know all these things have a true and certain idea of this kingdom.

And moreover, it tends unto consolation. For we forewarn you all that the devil and the world, and every thing that is high in the world, together with all the splendid show of sanctity and wisdom, will surely oppose this kingdom: all this, the prophet foretels us,

will most certainly with common consent invade this kingdom of Christ.

But you will say, perhaps, these things frighten, more than console and comfort. By no means. For the Psalm tells us this,—that Satan and the world, with all their powers and all their efforts, will effect nothing else than to excite the laughter of God, and at last to rouse him to indignation ; so that they all must then of necessity perish who oppose this kingdom, be they as many as they may. To know this, is useful and profitable, and full of consolation ; and it tends also most especially to produce a clear understanding of this kingdom, that we may not be moved by the various offences around us which assault this kingdom, nor broken, nor cast down in our minds.

In our times, the success of the Gospel was at first great : for all hoped for that, for which the apostles also hoped, before they were taught the true nature of Christ's kingdom by the Holy Ghost ;—namely, that it would bring with it political liberty, and quietness, and laxity of discipline. But when a tumult began to be made first by Munzer, who was impelled on by a seditious spirit, then also there followed disturbances in the churches by means of Carlstadt, Zinglius, and other fanatical teachers. And now at length the true external nature and appearance of this kingdom of Christ began to be discovered ;—namely, disturbance in the church itself, as it then was, and seditions in the state politic, and, in a word, much infirmity in the saints themselves : so that, according to an ancient poet, the only safety or salvation was to hope for no safety or salvation in the midst of so many and great perils : that is, to despair of any salvation being obtained from such tumult and confusion. And here, many who could look no higher, and see no farther, than these external perils, were broken down in their minds, revolted aside, and began to hate even the Gospel itself.

And what other cause was there of this evil than this,—their being ignorant of the true nature and condition of the kingdom of Christ? For the nature and state

of that kingdom are these,—that it is attacked on all sides by Satan and the world. They who know not this will fall away amidst all these perils, and will condemn the Gospel as a seditious doctrine.

David, therefore, that he might fortify our minds against these offences beforehand, paints forth to us the kingdom of Christ with all its attendant circumstances. And he begins his description in a most rhetorical manner, with a striking interrogation; asking, why it was that this kingdom should have all the multitude and the great of the world its adversaries? In this forcible way, therefore, he opens his Psalm and says,

Ver. 1.—*Why do the nations (or heathen) rage and the people meditate vain things?*

This is a most pathetic opening, and a most appropriate interrogation! For the prophet filled, as it were, with wonder, says, What can be the meaning of this? The nations are all in a tumult, and the people are meditating and consulting together: and all this is not against the king of the Persians, not against the Turk, but against the Lord. But shall not all these attempts be ridiculous, foolish, and in vain? Let no one then be cast down with fear: let no one be terrified at these counsels, for the event shall prove that they are most vain: for they are not against men, as they appear to be, but they are planned against the Lord.

Thus, at the very outset and beginning, the prophet draws us away from fear to hope, and consoles us by assuring us, that, unless the nations and the people cease from these their counsels and plots, they shall all be hurled to destruction; because, they are taking counsel together, not against men, but against God.

And now, only read the writings of the papists, and hear their sermons, and you will find that they all rest and remain in this assertion,—‘ That nothing good arises out of our doctrine; for that, as soon as our Gospel sounded forth, a horrible sedition and insurrection of the peasantry took place; that various sects and divisions broke out in the church; that all the reins of discipline were

let go; and that all the bars and bolts of the laws were, as it were, burst through, and the greatest licentiousness every where prevailed.—All this is indeed true; for there is a greater and more licentious indulgence in every kind of vice now, than there was in former times when the commonalty were restrained by fear: for they now, like an unbridled horse, do all things as they list: they despise all those ecclesiastical restraints by which they were before curbed under the Pope, and they abuse also the negligence of the civil magistrate. All these evils, which indeed are no small evils, our adversaries impute to our doctrine, or to the Gospel.

But do thou for a moment suspend thy judgment, and first of all consider the whole matter thoroughly, and bring it into the form of a regular argument; and see if the consequences and conclusions are correct and true.—This is a bad theologian: therefore, Theology is bad. This is a wicked lawyer: therefore, The knowledge of law is bad. This teacher is a licentious character: therefore, The profession of such an one is, to teach licentiousness! But should we not call the man who should draw such conclusions and defend them a madman? And yet, the conclusions which our adversaries draw are not in the least more wise. But listen to the declaration contained in this Psalm; where it is forewarned, that it should certainly come to pass, that, as soon as the King should begin his kingdom, that is, as soon as he should begin to teach and spread abroad the Gospel, ragings of the nations and tumults of the people, and battles and wars of kings, and counsels and plots of the rulers, should take place,—and against whom? “against the Lord, and against his Christ!”

Therefore, establish and fortify thy conscience: and, being admonished by the Holy Spirit, assure thyself beforehand, that the world will rage. But do not imagine that the cause of these ragings is this King, or his Word; but be assured that the cause is Satan and the wicked world. And do thou draw conclusions contrary to the above-mentioned: and say, Although evils follow upon the preaching of the doctrine of this King, the doctrine

is not *therefore* evil; but rather, men are evil who oppose such good doctrine, and wish to suppress it. For this is a true and certain conclusion,—that, the more determinately the world opposes this holy doctrine, the worse and more wicked that world is evinced to be; for this doctrine ought not to be evil spoken of on account of the wickedness of men. The Jews crucified Christ: are we then *therefore* to accuse Christ of being an evil Teacher!

We ought, therefore, to hold ourselves fortified against all such conclusions; and say, What is it unto God, what is it unto his Word, if men are evil? This is the fault of men, not of God! God for that very end sent his Son and his Word, that men might be saved: but if they will not be saved, let them perish by their own fault. Christ will not, on account of their unwillingness, cease to be the Son of God! God will not, on that account, cast him away, whom he has appointed to be King of all!

The opening of this Psalm, therefore, is designed to instruct us, that we might learn, that the Word of God, where it does come, comes attended with the rage and fury of kings and rulers. And of this Christ himself shews the cause in the Gospel; where he says, that Satan, as a strong man armed, keeps his palace and goods in peace; but that, when a stronger than he comes, he rages and roars and tries all things. And this is proved by the history of all the ages of the church. For whenever Christ begins to cast out Satan, what rage, what impatient fury, agitates those who are disturbed. For Satan hates Christ, and hates his Word; and will not yield to him or give place to his Word. When, therefore, Christ presses him hard, and begins to force him out, he is indignant and filled with rage, and exerts all his might; he stirs up his kings, his rulers, his bishops, his popes, his citizens, and his peasants, and sets them all against the Word.

This our adversaries do not see: and thereby they make it manifest, that they know nothing about the kingdom of Christ, nor what kind of a kingdom it is: they can only



understand it as being a kingdom of this world. And therefore, when they do not see that peace in Christ's kingdom, without which a kingdom of the world cannot consist, they condemn both the Word of Christ and his kingdom, and prefer to it the kingdoms of the world. But this Psalm teaches us quite the contrary; and admonishes us to cleave close to the kingdom of Christ, even though all men should rage and roar. For what is all this to us? Our peace lies out of all this rage and tumult, and stands firm and unaffected by them. Our King still remains King, in defiance of the world and the gates of hell!

All this those who are powerful in the wisdom of the world only see not, and therefore they try with all their devoted endeavours to draw us away from this King, and to drag us over to their own opinions and cogitations, that we also may be anxious and intent upon holding fast the peace of the world. All therefore who attempt this, "take counsel together," and imagine, that peace can be held fast by human industry. But all these endeavours will prove absurd and vain; and the reason why the world enter upon them, is, because they know nothing of this kingdom. And as it is in vain to weary yourself in attempting to restrain the devil and to prevent him from rising up against Christ; so, it is in vain for you to attempt to restrain his hands, his eyes, his tongues, and his feet, that is, the rulers of the world and impious teachers. For as soon as ever Christ begins to open his mouth and speak, immediately Satan rages in his members, his eyes grow fiery, his hands and wills (the wills of his creatures) are inflamed, and he stirs up all the power and wealth there is in the world to oppress the Word.

And be thou assured, that this is the reason why so many seditions have broken out in our time, and so many impious opinions in the church. For Satan is unable to bear the Word. Therefore, when Christ now thunders by the Gospel into many parts of the world, and lays open the idolatry and abomination of popery, Satan would be wiser if he were to hold his tongue

about, or pretend not to see, all this destruction. Whereas, we saw him rage most desperately, when some particular morals, as it were, were attacked and exposed by that holy man, John Huss. For he did not, as we do, condemn openly the sacrifice of the mass, and merits, and other such superstitious forms of worship. He called into question the primacy of the Pope; he contended that indulgences ought not to be sold; he denied purgatory, because he saw it was a mere handle for gain; and yet, even at this Satan was so galled, that he involved all Germany and Bohemia in a long and horrid war.

The Holy Ghost, therefore, in this Psalm comforts us, and teaches us to cleave closely to this King, and to look at him with a steady eye, rather than at the tumults and other offences in the world: for the condition and nature of his kingdom are such, that they cannot be without tumults: not, however, from any fault or cause in the kingdom itself, but because Satan and the ungodly world cannot bear this King. Learn this, therefore, and when tumults increase, when nations roar, when the people are set on meditating, when kings rise up, and when rulers take counsel together about opposing and oppressing this King, be thou of a strong and fortified mind, and be not moved by such perils: for the Holy Ghost has forewarned us in this Psalm that it shall be so, and that the whole world shall be stirred when this King shall open his mouth.

When, therefore, the kings and the rulers in this our time are maddened against us; when Zinglius and Carlstadt and others cause disturbances in the church; when the peasantry and citizens despise the Gospel, they do nothing new: let us not, therefore, on that account, cast away the Gospel: but, on the contrary, let us render thanks unto God, who has called us into this kingdom, which we prize above all merits, and all the peace and wealth of the world: nay, for the sake of which we willingly endure all dangers.—Concerning these same things also the following verse goes on to prophesy.

Ver. 2.—*The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed.*

The Holy Ghost speaks of the four descriptions of men who shall with united counsel oppose themselves to this King. The first are the “kings” or monarchs who excel in dignity and power. The second are the “nations,” or ‘heathen;’ that is, those who are subjects of those kings. The third are the “people,” or communities and commonwealths. And the fourth are the “rulers;” that is, inferior magistrates, and all those who excel in counsel and wisdom. What then has the Holy Ghost here omitted, as that which shall not oppose this kingdom? Nothing! Power, wisdom, riches, righteousness, holiness, are, indeed, signal gifts of God; and yet, all these are abused by the world and turned against the kingdom of God. And is not this the extreme of malice and wickedness? But remember this!—kingdoms and principalities, and those other gifts of God, are not here condemned, as being evil in themselves. For it does not follow thus—you are not to draw these conclusions—The kingdoms of the world fight against the kingdom of Christ: therefore, those things are evil in themselves, And so also, you are not to draw this conclusion—The steel with which the side of Christ was pierced upon the cross, was not a good creature. The creature itself is good, even in the midst of the abuse of it. For the abuse arises, not from the thing itself, but from the depravity of man’s heart. Thus also, civil righteousness, the laws themselves, the arts, the sciences, are all things good in their nature; but it is the abuse that is evil; because the world abuses all these gifts against God himself.

It is in this state of abusing the gifts of God that the world is here described, together with its kingdoms, its nations, its people, and its rulers; and the description is given to no other end than that we being forewarned might not be held with wonder, seeing that these things must be so. Hence, the world all cry out, ‘That

there is nothing among us but heresies, errors, seditions, offences.' And therefore they condemn us with all security, while they themselves triumph in their wisdom, their glory, their power, and, I will add also, their righteousness, and glory on and boast of them before us. But to all these boastings we must become accustomed, and not be moved at them, nor suffer our minds to be cast down: for the Holy Ghost has forewarned us of all these things, when he declares beforehand, that kings should set themselves against this kingdom, and that the rulers should take counsel together to overthrow it.

These characters, therefore, are the cause of all these tumults and offences, and not we who are humble, gentle, and quiet, and who publish forth a kind of doctrine that is not turbulent, but most quiet and sweet. Were it otherwise, and did these tumults take place from the fault of our doctrine, it must be that all we ourselves must be unquiet and turbulent who profess it. Whereas, we aim with all our powers to pray for peace, and to desire that all occasions for offences may be cut off. But our adversaries, as their own endeavours testify, aim day and night to sow dissensions, to pronounce sentence on our lives, and to stir up against us the rulers of this world. And yet, they accuse our doctrine as being seditious, and as exciting tumults, but they say that they themselves are the sons of peace.

Let us, therefore, take comfort and consolation from this Psalm; and let us consider it as a fixed certainty, that, when the world rages in this manner, although it fights against us, yet, that it does not fight against us only, but against another, who, though we are few, weak, helpless, and oppressed with various evils, is the Lord, and not a vulgar or common lord of this world, but the Lord of the whole creation!

Is not the world, then, most foolish and ignorant, though it seems to itself to be most wise? For, if a naked child should oppose himself to a thousand pointed spears, who would not shudder at his danger, knowing his destruction to be certain? Or, if any one were to engage

to put out the light of the sun by a lighted straw, who would not laugh at his folly? The world, then, is perpetually in the midst of this peril and this folly; because, it opposes itself to the Word and the church; and therefore, it sets itself against God himself, the Creator of all things.

This is the consolation, therefore, that this Psalm is intended to instil into our minds. But we have need of a large and capacious eye, to grasp all the kings of the world, with all their wisdom and power, at one view, and to consider them all as nothing but a burning straw, which he, who made the heavens and the earth, and all all things, can extinguish at one breath.

The kings, the rulers, the nations, and the people, if you look at them in a human way, are something immense and terrible: and therefore, we tremble when we compare our weakness with their power. But what does the Holy Spirit teach us in this place? He opposes to this immense power (as it seems to be) the Lord only: and wonders that the world can be such a fool as to think that it can effect any thing in defiance of the Lord of all, when it is but as a single spark to the whole sea, which may extinguish it in a moment. As if he had said, Is it not the extreme of folly, when thou, O world, which art but as a single spark, attemptest to dry up the whole sea?

But as we, when we are in the midst of the peril, can scarcely believe this; so also, the kings and rulers can never suffer themselves to be persuaded that they are only as a spark. And therefore, they think that they are destructive and devouring flames. But events and experience have taught the greatest and mightiest monarchs the contrary, even from the beginning of the world, who have attempted to set themselves against this Lord.

All the force of the matter, therefore, lies in that which the Holy Ghost mentions in this second verse,—that the nations rage, the people imagine, the kings rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD principally, and then also against his ANOINTED,

OF CHRIST, OR MESSIAH. For it is not in vain that the LORD is mentioned first: for the Holy Ghost would thereby shew us, that God the Father is the one principally fought against by the raging world. Though the world declares that it does not fight against God the Father, the Creator of all things. And the papists aver that they do not fight against his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom they by mouth confess to be the Saviour of the world; but it is against his Gospel that they fight, which, to the wise of this world, is foolishness, and which, to those who are puffed up with their own righteousness, is an offence and heresy. So also the Jews would not have it said that they fought against God, the Creator of heaven and earth, but against the doctrine of Jesus, that Nazarene, whom they would not receive as the Son of God, promised in Moses and the prophets, but whom they persecuted as a seditious man and a blasphemer, and whom they at last put to death.

But as Christ is of the Father; that is, constituted of the Father and sent by him, it comes to pass, that those who reject this Son, or set themselves against him, run upon God the Creator himself. Therefore, the world is deceived both ways, how much soever it may boast of its wisdom. For, in the first place, it does not see this great Lord against whom it rises up; and then, in the next place, it does not see its own weakness, that it is but as a mere small and obscure spark to the blazing sun.—Let us, however, be right judges; and let us form our judgment, not from the opinions of the world, but from the Word; and the Word compares the world, with all its powers, to a spark ready to go out: if this dying spark, therefore, attempt to dry up the whole sea, it will be absorbed and extinguished in a moment. He that believes this has a true knowledge of Christ and his kingdom.

But however, we have a greater and more abundant consolation from this,—that it is not we who are attacked by the angry and infuriated world, but it is the Anointed, or Christ, of God himself, the head of the church, who is attacked and fought against by them, and God himself,

who is the head of Christ, as Paul speaks. What then will the world get by all its striving and opposition? How shall it not be most awfully endangered? Most certainly the world will not be able to withstand and suppress Christ, whom God hath constituted to be his Anointed. Nor will it be able to make war against and overcome God, and to hurl him down from heaven. Why then do we fear, why do we tremble at such vain and foolish attempts? Why do we not rather laugh at the world's extreme folly?

Therefore, in the name of Jesus, whom the Father has appointed as his Anointed, let us sing this Psalm in our churches as the apostles sung it: and let us explode the famed argument of our adversaries, when they attempt to rule over us, and cast it in our teeth, 'That no good arises out of our doctrine; and that, seditions, wars, heresies, and sects, in infinite numbers have risen up since the spread of the Gospel.' Let us, I say, explode these arguments and assertions, and let us rather triumph over them in the Holy Ghost, saying with this Psalm, Why do the heathen rage? Why do the people vainly take counsel together? Why do the kings gather themselves together against the Lord, and the rulers take counsel together against his Christ? For, if the world wished to do its duty it would "kiss the Son," and would embrace the Father's "commandment" or 'decree' concerning the Son. Whereas, now it does neither: it takes up arms, makes war, and raises sects against him. Hence we may say for certain, that the Holy Ghost lieth not; seeing that, he foretold so long before, by his servant David, that it would come to pass, that, when this King came forth with his thunders, not one or the other tree only, but the world, and whatever is great in the world, (as he says in another Psalm) would set themselves against him, and that the whole earth would be disturbed, and the mountains moved.

Hence, these thoughts often creep even upon the godly,—they wish that they had kept silent and not spoken any thing; because so many tumults have been excited by what they said. But cast thou away all such

cogitations, and be assured, that greater matters are herein concerned than the peace and tranquillity of the world, and than all the riches and possessions of the world together. For the matter here concerned, is, that he whom God the Father has appointed his Christ, should be known, exalted, and adored.—They that will not do this, let them rage, let them shew their indignation, let them be infuriated, let them mingle heaven and earth : yet, the Lord, who has appointed his Christ, shall cast all such down into hell, but shall save and preserve his Word, his church, and Christ the head of his church, for ever and ever ! Amen.

*Ver. 3.—Let us break their bands in sunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

Here the Holy Ghost sets forth to us the cause of their ‘raging,’ and what kind of counsels they take together, and what the kings and rulers consult among each other : namely, that they strive with all their might and all their endeavours, to burst in sunder the bonds of Christ and the Father. For Satan’s aim is, not only to humble and put to shame, not only to kill us who preach and believe, but utterly to destroy and abolish the name of Christ, the Word, and every thing that belongs to our religion.

When, therefore, we begin to preach Christ with a powerful faith, he begins to rage ; he gets hold of the wills of his kings and rulers, his wise, his powerful, and his multitudes : and all these with common consent strive at this one thing,—to burst in sunder these bonds ; that is, to destroy and abolish the Word, and to establish idolatry.

Therefore, we are pressed by Satan on both sides : for he is armed both with violence and deceit. His violence is executed by his kings, his nations, his rulers, his people. And his deceit is, when he frames in us cogitations and opinions about the way in which we ought to preserve the Word and the peace of the world also. For we all by nature abhor every thing in the shape of tumult, because the inconveniencies of them are well



known and continually before our eyes ; and we naturally love peace as being the most lovely of all things ; as the devil himself is continually telling us. But he that indulges these cogitations, is by degrees drawn away so far, as, for the sake of peace, to lose the kingdom of Christ.

Let us learn then to fix our eyes upon this our King, and observe him, and not be moved by the noises of arms and trumpets which are raised. Nay, let us feel and be assured that the kings, princes, nations, and people, and the whole world together, when they set themselves against this Lord, are but as a grain of dust, and that Christ is a mighty mountain. He that has this persuasion fixed in his mind will not be moved by all the attempts of Satan and the world.—Sects and tumults arise in the church : but what are they to me ? says the persuaded mind. Let the whole world perish and me have Christ only. Peace is indeed the most beautiful of all things : but if this peace cannot be retained, what is the perishing of it ? nothing but the going out of the spark of the least of all creatures. But in Christ I have preserved for me righteousness, salvation, eternal life ! These are truly good things, to which if you compare the peace of this world, and the other conveniences of this life, they are nothing ; for they are uncertain and of short duration.

We need to be consoled and must comfort ourselves in this way : otherwise, it will come to pass, that, being moved and taken up with the loss of these temporal conveniences, we shall begin to tremble and complain, unless we are enabled to prefer before them these spiritual and eternal things : and we shall murmur and complain at the loss of those temporal things as being a great calamity : and from this little spark of discontent will at length rise up a flame of unbelief that will burn and swallow up Christ in us with all his gifts and benefits.

David here sees in spirit the fury of the world setting itself with all its might and violence against Christ, but yet he is not disturbed in his mind. And this stands as an example for us ; that we should not

care about the Turk, nor the Pope, nor kings, nor princes, when they set themselves against this King: for they are all fools and blind, and do not see that when they attempt to oppress the Gospel, they attempt an impossibility.—And in this same way also we ought to overcome all other offences.

And as to a great clamour being raised by our Gospel, and tumults existing which had no existence before; as to the peace of the world being destroyed, and the licentiousness of the commonalty being inflamed the more;—many consider that all these complaints are just. But why do not these same persons complain of the great contempt thus put upon the Gospel? of the extreme pertinacity and insolence of the adversaries of the Word? of the insults and injury thus offered to Christ? The truth is, they esteem the conveniences of the world of greater value than Christ. They are more taken with these things than with the glory of God and the salvation of souls. But if all these great things move thee not, and concern thee not, thinkest thou not that Christ will say to thee, If the blessings of my kingdom affect thee not, if thou grieve not for my kingdom thus variously and undeservedly torn, why should I grieve at thy inconveniences, at thy disturbed peace, &c.? No, perish thou rather than that my kingdom perish.—Hence it were to be wished that this King and his kingdom were rightly known; then, those who despised him, we also should despise; and we should trust only to the riches and benefits of this King, and not to the riches and benefits of the world.

Only observe, then, the greatness of the depravity of our enemies! The Gospel, which proclaims to us the grace of God, and which promises us righteousness and eternal life, they call ‘bands,’ “cords,” and ‘a yoke. What then should one do with such a lost and lying world? for if you were to give it a gift of a thousand pounds in gold, it would illiberally cast back the gift in your teeth, and say it was a burthen. Does it not, then, deserve to perish with hunger and thirst?

But by this sin of theirs do kings, rulers, nations,

and people provoke God. He gives them the Word, and with it offers them life eternal. But they on this very account take up arms, that they may not be compelled to embrace these gifts. They fill all things with war and tumults, because God promises that he will, for his Son's sake, pardon sins, and bestow an abundance of all good things even in this life. Does not the world then deserve to be destroyed with eternal flames?

Remember, then, that the kingdom of Christ is such that the whole world resists it, and especially every thing in that world that is eminent for dignity, power, wisdom, righteousness, and wealth. Our minds should be fortified, therefore, that we tremble not, nor think that these tumults can be avoided or prevented by any moderation in us, or by any other such means. For the world is ever like itself, and ever willingly offers itself to the service of Satan, who hates the Word with deadly hatred. Nay, even our own flesh and the wisdom of our flesh, and even our conscience also, ever oppose themselves, by nature, to this kingdom.

Let no one even imagine, therefore, that he takes upon him a matter of mere joke when he professes the Word and the faith of Christ, for he will ever find the kings and the rulers his adversaries, whom the devil will always stir up against him. But although we are not equal to these of ourselves, yet God will have us enter the battle against them that he might magnify his glory, and display his power and wisdom in our infirmity, by supplying us with power from heaven, which power not even the gates of hell shall be able to resist: and this power shall confound the wisdom and power of all the adversaries of the Word.

You have described, in this verse, therefore, the thoughts, attempts, and disputations of kings, and rulers, and nations, and people, nay, of thine own flesh also, and of thy very conscience, which the devil also vexes that thou mayest think and meditate on bursting these bonds and casting off this yoke. Kings and rulers use force and arms; but thy heart fights with infidelity against this kingdom when it doubts of the promises, and when

it will not receive the consolation of the remission of sins, of freely given righteousness, and of eternal life.

But sit down calmly now and tell me the truth.—Is not this a horrible temptation, and a most dreadful sin, that the world calls this Gospel, this all-sweet message and proclamation of the remission of sins, and of eternal life, obtained and freely given us by Jesus Christ, ‘bands,’ ‘cords,’ and ‘a yoke?’ Only consider now in thy mind all the affairs of the world, and thou wilt see that they are most unlikely, and, so to speak, opposite to each other: not only with respect to carnal power, but more especially with respect to religion, laws, and affections.—For instance. How many idols had Rome! How many had Greece! How many had Egypt! And yet none of these, though most opposite to each other, ever took up arms on account of religion. Nay, the Romans, when they became masters of Greece, did not only not hate the Greeks on account of their religion, and worship, and rites, many of which were quite different from their own, but even embraced many of them themselves, as the histories concerning the Ælusinian mysteries, and the serpent of Epidaurus, and the image of Idea Mater shew. And even among us, what a diversity of rites and forms of worship were there before the shining of the Gospel: they were forms and rules that differed, not only according to the different dioceses, but according to each different place of worship. Yet all these things never offended any one!—But as soon as ever Christ came with his Gospel, to take away all these diversities of religions and forms, and to make all one body; then immediately all those who differed most oppositely from each other in religion, all banded and conspired together and formed themselves into one body to suppress this kingdom of Christ. For what else was the kingdom of the Pope but a monster of many and various heads? especially if you look at the monks: some of whom followed Augustine, some Francis, some Dominic, some Benedict, just as each one thought those fathers and founders of sects worthy of being revered.

And why was all this rage of the world and this dif-

ference of sects? I answer: Because these characters will not lose nor let go their own righteousness, will not endure to have their own wisdom confounded, will not leave their own honour, name, and power, and in one word, will not, and cannot, observe the first commandment, but will fight against it with all the powers of their will, abilities, and fortunes. They ought to love God and to prefer him before all things, but they love themselves and their own. They ought to exalt and praise the righteousness of God only, and to trust to, and depend on, that alone: but they make their own righteousness of so much consequence and estimation, that they care nothing about the righteousness of God at all. Thus as the ape loveth her young, so the world love only that which is their own: in this they rejoice, glory, and exult, and utterly neglect and despise all that which is out of themselves and placed in faith only, and trample it under their feet as a thing of naught.

But the object of the Gospel is this one thing,—to set Christ before the minds and eyes of all, and to teach them to look at *him* only, to depend on *him* alone, and to trust and rely on nothing else but *him* who took our flesh upon him, and who in our nature conquered Satan, killed death, and vanquished and destroyed hell. And hence, the Gospel declares him alone to be wise, because he alone knew and did the will of his Father: him only to be righteous, because he alone never committed sin, but can and will freely give his righteousness unto all that believe in him: and him only powerful, because he alone conquered the “strong man” armed, and took and spoiled his palace.

Christ, therefore, would have us confide in and trust to his wisdom, righteousness, and power; and then he promises that we shall be accounted, and shall be, wise, righteous, and powerful. And if we be destitute of this wisdom, we are fools, sinners, and weak creatures. But the world, strives with all its might to burst in sunder this doctrine as “bands,” and to cast it off from them as a “yoke.”

Thus all the contention with this King is about the first commandment. And the Holy Ghost's design in

this prophecy is to confirm our minds against this offence ; when we see, that the most powerful kings and rulers, and the most holy and most wise among men, whose kingdoms and empires are governed with wisdom, and whose righteousness and wisdom are held in high esteem, set themselves against this King ; and for no other reason than because they will not, and cannot bear to be fools before God, when they hear it declared that all human laws, discipline, honesty, and other good arts are useless and unavailing to the attainment of eternal life and the remission of sins. And therefore, they raise a tumult, they rage, they consult together, and rise up against the Gospel as a seditious and pernicious doctrine, which gives occasion for licentiousness, and which prevents good works, or at least casts them away and condemns them, because it says that they are of no avail unto righteousness.

But how true this accusation is let the good and godly decide. The Gospel does not condemn good works ; for this would be to condemn and make void the law : whereas the Gospel rather establishes the law, as Paul teaches us, because it shews us the way in which alone the law can be fulfilled and satisfied, and continually exhorts to the fulfilling of the law and to good works. It only guards us against, and prohibits us from, this one thing,—putting our trust in these works for righteousness before God. For it shews us that all our confidence and trust are to be placed alone in the crucified Son of God. Him we are to embrace by faith, and he promises that we shall then be righteous before God, though we are sinners in our own sight and in the sight of the world ; he promises that we shall be powerful, though we are weakness itself in ourselves ; and he promises that we shall be wise, though we are fools before the world. The Gospel, therefore, bids us trust in this crucified Son of God.

But the world refuse to do this, because they see not this righteousness, power, and wisdom : and therefore they will not lose nor let go those present things which they see before their eyes, and which they hold in their hands ; they will not be bound under a trusting to things

that are invisible and which appear not ; because it is of these things only that the Gospel speaks, and these only it proclaims. And therefore, they call these things “ bands,” ‘ cords,’ and ‘ a yoke,’ whereby they are bound, and pressed, and prevented from having their righteousness, power, and wisdom, and from holding them in estimation.

Hence arise all these common clamours—What ! Is man then nothing ? Is not the will of man free, then ? Is God, then, the cause of the damnation of the ungodly ? Why did he not, then, create us righteous ? Are, then, our forefathers, who knew not these things, all damned ? Are you, then, the only persons among men that are wise, righteous, and to be saved ? These are the clamours that are heard and read every where.—Nor can these blind men be healed, because they will not hear : for we continue to admonish, write, preach, cry aloud, and declare that wisdom, power, and the other good creatures of God are to be used in this life to manage our present affairs and to govern kingdoms, &c. ; and that our reason ought to exert itself, in this sphere, and expatiate, act, and watch in this field ; but that, before God, all these things are nothing and avail nothing unto righteousness and salvation : for, before him, a better righteousness, and a greater power than our own are required.

But all our declarations are like a tale told to a deaf man : for they exclaim against the Gospel, and call it “ bands” and an insupportable “ yoke :” because they see that their wisdom and righteousness are declared to be useless and inefficacious before God. “ We will not (say they) have this man to reign over us.” They, like the Jews, clamorously condemn both the doctrine, and us who assent to this doctrine. They call us seditious, heretics, diabolical : while they like the scribes and pharisees of old glory in the chair of Moses and in the name of church : and they arrogate to themselves alone the possession of righteousness and wisdom, and fight for it even with fire and sword.

Here, then, you have a picture of the world. They

hate both Christ, the King, and his kingdom, and they attempt every means in their power that they think will go to overthrow this kingdom.—What then is the hope of the church in the midst of so many perils? That hope now follows.

Ver. 4.—*He that sitteth in the heavens laughs at them, the Lord has them in derision.*

This is the voice of the Holy Spirit, sent through the mouth of the prophet on account of the pusillanimity and weakness which he sees in us; and also on account of the multitude and weakness of kings and adversaries. For whatever is high in the world, the whole of it together joins and unites its efforts against the church, which as it is small in numbers, so also it is destitute of all the gifts and advantages of which the world boasts.

The church when she sees herself surrounded with all these offences, which are, as it were, waves of the sea, and when she considers the mighty and numerous arms of kings, and their power and resources with which she is assailed, begins to fear and tremble. For the human heart is not iron or stone, but of flesh and sensible; and therefore it is affected deeply in the midst of such perils. For the matter is, that the Christian has not one or another single enemy against him only, but, as the Holy Ghost here says, kings, rulers, nations, people, all rise up against him: nay all the devils together assail and attack the poor solitary follower of Christ; (to say nothing now about all the scruples and pangs of his own conscience with which he is exercised.)

In the midst of such peril, therefore, the merciful Lord comes to him by, and in, his Word, and sets against all this multitude of evils and offences other things that are far greater and mightier. For he does not only say as in the 10th Psalm, “The eyes of the Lord are towards the poor:” but he says of all those enemies of the church and their attempts, “He that sitteth in the heavens laughs, and the Lord holds them in derision.” Here he swallows up in one consolatory word all the fury of men, kings, rulers, and devils, put together.



The enemies that oppose the church, are indeed great and powerful, and they are many, and excel in wisdom, and have a great name for being righteous. And we on the other hand are few and weak, and besides our being thus overwhelmed with the multitude and magnitude of the great ones of the world, we have our own conscience much against us, and are troubled and distressed with the knowledge and sense of our own weakness.

We must learn, therefore, the consolation here given, that we may not be confounded with the distressing and fearful view of things around us, but say, But I know one who inhabits an all-fortified and inaccessible citadel, to which not only kings and rulers cannot approach, but not even the devil himself. For all these are either on earth or in the air: but the habitation of that mighty King that I know is the heaven itself, where the power neither of men nor of devils is of any avail.

It is, therefore, in contempt of the adversaries of the church that David does not mention by name who this inhabitant of heaven is, but simply says, **IOSCHEF BASCHAMAIM**, 'the inhabiting heaven,' or 'the inhabitant of heaven:' and being full of faith and of the Spirit, he sets this 'inhabitant of heaven' against all the fury of the world and of hell.

This is a new and unheard of declaration; namely, the Lord's laughing and holding all these adversaries and their attempts, in derision. Because, reason declares that God either does not see all such things, and that therefore they take place by chance and go on at random; or else that he is weak and does not stop and suppress evil men when he does see them. For reason thinks, that for God to see these things and yet to suffer them, is injustice and iniquity. This is the honour in which reason holds God! and thus judges that he is either a fool who neither sees nor knows many things; or else, that he does not prevent the evil which he does see.—Against these blasphemies, therefore, the Holy Ghost here fortifies us, that we might not think that God does not see the attempts of the wicked; because, he does see them, but permits them to go on for a time.—How

great and undeserved are the cruelty and ferocity of the Turks! With what hatred do the popes and their bishops burn against the Word of God and the true members of his church! How full of hatred are all the counsels and assemblings of our tyrants!—Let us not think that our Father who is in heaven is ignorant of these things, or that they are hidden from his eyes. He sees them; but he is not so immediately moved to anger as we are: he shews not his wrath at once: he laughs for a time: not only because he sees that all such attempts are in vain: but because he thereby grants them a time for repentance.

This, therefore, is a spiritual thought by which the church and each of its members ought to be instructed, that we may be taken away from visible things to invisible. The visible and tangible things of the world are the fury of the world, of the Turk, and of the Pope: but this laughing of him that sitteth in heaven is invisible, and therefore it must be apprehended by faith and believed, and then we shall laugh also; because the enemies of the church all meditate “vain things.” For when the Holy Ghost says, that God laughs at the wicked and holds them in derision, he does that for our sakes, that we also might laugh with God, and might not be astonished or tremble when the popes, and bishops, and kings, and rulers, unite all their efforts to oppress the Gospel, and when, in a word, the devil overwhelms, as it were, the church with various offences; for all such counsels and attempts are in vain.

But we find by experience, that this laughing is impossible unto us; because, of ourselves, we can neither despise the things that are visible, nor apprehend those that are invisible. We sensibly feel the power and violence of kings and rulers, the wisdom of the world, the malice of Satan, and the burden of sin and of our own conscience; and therefore, we do not laugh at them, but howl because of them, and faint and despair, and that makes the whole of our life a bitterness unto ourselves. But all this is wrong. For what do we profit ourselves even if we afflict ourselves unto death; for the world will never be healed, nor will Satan ever become more kind.

Let us learn, therefore, to lift up our minds in the midst of such perils, and laugh together with our God, who, we are sure, will not laugh long, but will at length let out his wrath against the ungodly, and will confound them ; as we shall see in the next verse.

And we shall find this laughing more easy to us, if we bear in mind that which David had said before, " Against the Lord, and against his Christ." For we ought to have this fixed as a certainty in our minds, that all these temptations, and all these roarings and ragings of the world, are raised against us for Christ's sake. He alone is the cause why we have the world, and Satan, and our own hearts also such bitter enemies to us. As Christ himself saith, John xv. " If ye were of the world, the world would love its own : but now, because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

And it is the same with respect to sin. Who can avoid wondering how the world, who live in sin, and not only will not believe the remission of sins, but even cast it from them when set before them in the Word, can live in security : while, on the contrary, the true members of the church, who hear the remission of sins, embrace it, and in some measure believe it, are the only ones who are exercised with fears night and day, and are *all but* swallowed up with distress on account of them.

And what is the cause of this ? This is the cause, and none other,—because they are Christians, and embrace the Word of Christ : therefore it is that Satan makes sin to sting them thus, and exercises them with the fears and dread of death and eternal damnation : so much so, that he will not suffer their godly hearts to rest a moment.

What then shall we do ? Shall we howl and complain ? Shall we give way in our minds and die under our sorrow ? No, by no means ! For we shall profit ourselves nothing by all this. Let us, therefore, rather lift up our heads as Christ commands us when he foretels us of his coming, and let us laugh at the raging of Satan and the world, yea, and even at sin and our own conscience also. For although the punishment of the

wicked lingereth as yet, we are all the while sure, that God who sitteth in the heavens laugheth at them, and that they cannot assault him nor throw him down from thence. Justly, therefore, does he laugh at all their attempts.

In this manner, therefore, let us call our minds off from visible things and transfer them over to things that are invisible; and let us take our eyes off from things present, and fix them on things heavenly, where all these tumults are not only vain, but have been vanquished and overcome for above one thousand five hundred years. For Christ thus speaks to us, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. And he comforts us also concerning judgment; saying, 'that the prince of this world is already judged.' When, therefore, these conquered enemies renew the war, they do nothing else but excite the laughter of God. Nor should either of us be able to refrain from laughing if we saw a fool seize a twig in his hand, and run with all his might against a tower, and attempt to beat it down: for both the fool and his attempt would be ridiculously vain.

In this way ought we to think of all the preparations, attempts, power, wrath, madness of the world and the devil, if we would ascend in our thoughts unto him who sitteth in the heavens and look up to him aright. For if you compare both him, the Turk, the Pope, and his bishops, kings, and rulers, and the whole kingdom of Satan, they will appear just like the fool above mentioned, attempting to beat down the tower with his twig.

This is that hidden wisdom which is to be learnt from the word only, and which transfers our thoughts from things present and things that appear unto those that are absent and that appear not. The present things are roarings and ragings of the Word, when we confess and believe in him. But let not these things move thee, and let not thy conscience afflict thee: leave all these sensible things and this distressing view of matters, and enter with Moses into the cloud and darkness: that is, embrace the things that are invisible. Ascend up on high unto the Lord and the Word of his promise, and

learn that God laughs at all the unbelieving folly of the world when they, with Satan at their head, attempt to injure the kingdom of God and to overthrow it. But those miserable creatures see not that all their power is only earthly, but that this King sitteth in the heavens, whither they cannot ascend.

AND NOW, whatever I have said concerning kings or adversaries of the Gospel, this I say also concerning each man's own conscience; that we may learn to lift ourselves up here also, and to be brave, not so much against the Turk and the Pope, as against ourselves. For Satan more bitterly and severely attacks and persecutes us by our own hearts and our own conscience, than by the sword and tyranny of our enemies. For the Turk can hurt us no farther than to cut off our head or cut our throats: but our own heart can raise such disputing in us, and such sorrow and distress, that we must of necessity perish therein utterly unless we be delivered by the Spirit and Word of God. The devil, therefore, is never more powerful, more crafty, more brave, more holy, more righteous, than when he comes to our own hearts. And if we can but once overcome the devil here, and cast him out of this his seat by a firm and steady faith, and thus get our minds transferred from visible things to invisible, we may then with ease laugh at all the vain attempts of kings, rulers, and tyrants, and care for them not a straw. For if these are a fear unto us, this terror does not arise from them, nor from what they can do, but it proceeds from our heart, which is weak and cleaves to present and visible things, and cannot apprehend those things which are hidden and invisible.

Let us learn, therefore, to be strong and courageous under all temptations, but more especially in fighting against ourselves and our own heart. For there it is that Satan has his firmest seat, and he is mightily aided in maintaining it by the times and things that are past: for he knows that we are sinners: and therefore he sets before us the series of all our sins, and places before our eyes the sad hand-writing, and heavily oppresses us with

it. Nay, he seizes present things also, and oppresses us with them; telling us that we do not believe so firmly as we ought, that we do not love with all our heart, and that we do not like having our patience tried. When he sets these evils before us, and exaggerates them, (for he is a crafty and powerful orator,) our minds and spirits are broken, and we are terrified: not only by the tumult and rage of the kings and rulers before-mentioned, but also by the falling of a leaf.

Let us, therefore, fortify our hearts and look at those things that are invisible, and to the cloud of the Word, and, let us not be terrified or alarmed at these things which we feel either within or without us, which are sensible and visible, and are felt by the flesh: let us put off sense with all her feelings, and go into those invisible things to which the present verse leads us. And when Satan objects, 'Behold, thou art a sinner; and thou neither believest nor lovest as the Word requireth;' do thou answer him thus, 'Why dost thou vex and torment me with these visible things. I feel these things plainly enough, and there is no need that thou shouldst continually dun me with them? What I want is to follow and obey the Word, and to be transferred to those things that are invisible: that is, to him who sitteth in the heavens, and to his Word: in the sight of whom, all these things that now terrify me are a nothing at all, a mere puppet-show, which is not made to terrify, but to excite laughter.

In this manner ought we to bring this verse into practice, not only in the midst of those external perils which are raised up against us by the enemies of the Word, the Turk, the Pope, and his bishops, kings, and rulers, (all of whom are furnished with power, wisdom, and human righteousness,) but also, under our spiritual temptations, when the devil terrifies our conscience and accuses us within on account of sins committed. And he that meditates on, and rightly uses, this verse, in these matters, will laugh at the devil and at all his threats and accusations also. He will say, 'All these things are nothing to me, devil; for they are all laughed at by my

God who is in heaven; thou wilt not prevail in attempting to harass and distress me. Nay, I also will laugh with my God: for I know that all thy attempts will be vain. For, although I am a sinner, and although the punishment of sin is eternal death, yet, I will not cease laughing, because there sitteth One at the right hand of God, who has made satisfaction for sin, and who has conquered and triumphed over thee in his flesh. And thou dost not attack me only in all these thy accusations, but him also, who has already thus conquered thee, even the Son of God!

For we are always to have this firmly fixed in our minds,—that all this spiritual persecution which we feel in our hearts from Satan is against, and on account of, Christ. For to believe the remission of sins through Christ, is the highest article of faith: and it is a most certain truth, that he who believes this article has the remission of his sins! and this is the reason why Satan strives so hard to tear this faith away from us. He, therefore, that follows those cogitations of Satan by which he is assailed and vexed, so as to cast away the hope of the remission of sins,—he sinneth.

Let us then not follow the cogitations of our own heart when it accuses us of sin, and when it would tempt us to conclude that the hope of the remission of sins does not belong to us. For this is to follow Satan vexing us, not only mediately by rulers and tyrants, but also immediately by sin and our own heart. But let us oppose ourselves to him with a manful and courageous mind; and let us say, ‘Thou shalt not distress and torment me, Satan; for he that is risen from the dead commands me to be at peace, and quiet. Therefore I will laugh, and will not howl, as thou wouldst have me, as if I were alone and without a helper.’

But what labour it is, and what time it requires to arrive at this holy skill, experience will teach all the faithful! For it is very easy to say, ‘The righteous shall be without fear;’ and, ‘The Christian shall not fear sin, nor death, but shall laugh at the devil and his threats;’ but, only try this matter in earnest, and thou wilt see,

whether or not thou canst easily keep up a joyful mind when thy conscience accuses thee, or when heresies or offences arise: for the flesh immediately begins to tremble, and wishes all things to be visibly quiet: but because the contrary takes place, and all things are filled with unrighteousness, ungodliness, folly, profanity, blasphemy, turbulence, and tumult, and all these things are visible to the eyes, therefore, the invisible things spoken of by the Holy Spirit in this place, are beaten out of the mind by these things that are visible.

Let us, therefore, accustom ourselves to these tempests, in the midst of which, Christians must live, and with which they must be continually surrounded; and let us hide ourselves in the cloud and apprehend these things invisible: then we shall laugh at the fury of the Turk, the Pope and his tyrants, sects, heretics, and all the enemies of the kingdom of Christ, and shall look upon the whole as a mere puppet-show.—He that can every where, and at all times, do this, is a true doctor of divinity. But neither Peter nor Paul, nor any of the other apostles, could do this at all times. And therefore, we also only profess to be learners, and not teachers, in this holy skill; though we do not deserve the name even of learners; for while God laughs we either writhe under fear, or rebel through discontent.

*Ver. 5.—Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*

The preceding verse represented the patience of God, which we indeed cannot bear, (for we want him to execute his rage on our enemies immediately,) but which is very common and usual with God himself. For he is accustomed to bear with the fury and ragings of the commonalty, the wicked, the kings, the rulers, and the people, for a time; nor does he send forth his thunders immediately when men sin. But in the mean time the church is sighing and groaning in the midst of danger and wishing for vengeance on her enemies: as Christ shews in his parable of the unjust judge, Luke xviii. For to the godly this patience and long-suffering of God



seem to have no likelihood of coming to an end; and hence, it is intolerable to them, and vexes and distresses those who are bearing the cross, not for one year only, but for many years together.

And yet this patience of ours is nothing to the patience of the saints and patriarchs of old, who lived under the same temptation for five hundred, six hundred, and a great number of years together. These our forefathers heard, not for thirty years, like us, but during the whole of their long life, this impious song of the wicked, 'Let us break their bands in sunder. God neither sees nor knows any of these things!' &c. For into this security the wicked at length always fall; because God is long-suffering, and puts off their punishment so long. But when these wicked glory thus in security, and when the godly are distressed and groan because of it, then we may be assured that the moment is nigh at hand, when God, who hears the sighings and groanings of the godly, and laughs at the fury and security of the wicked, will be moved to wrath. And this is the final close of the awful scene!

This verse, therefore, contains a most sweet promise, like unto numberless others which we find in the Psalms: as Psalm ix. 9, "The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed." And Psalm x. 17, "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble." Again, 'Thou lookest upon malice and spite to requite it: thou art the helper of the fatherless.' And again, Psalm lxxviii. 10, "He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." And again, Psalm cx. 6, "He shall wound the heads over many countries."

This promise, therefore, is our hope; and it is especially intended to lift up miserable and dejected consciences, which conscience they almost wholly overwhelm who sing this impious song, "Let us break their bands in sunder." For it is not in our power to impose silence upon them, so that they shall not sing this song of the wicked: nor can we always stop our ears so as not to hear it. Therefore, we must bear with this their security for a time, and appear not to be moved at it,

and thus overcome it, letting it remain until the time when the Lord shall begin to speak: for he has a mighty and effective voice, which immediately stops the wicked, while we can scarce open our mouths because of their clamours.

The Hebrew particle *AZ* does not signify any certain time or period, but is an indefinite particle, as, 'It shall come to pass that he shall speak,' or, 'He will at length speak:' and then, that laughing of God, which was hidden while the wicked were going on securely, shall be revealed: as we have it, Psalm xci. 8, "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." For the judgments of God shall not be always hidden: the wrath of God is at length beheld in a clear light. Though the wicked think that God is asleep; and they imagine he does not regard what they are doing, nor what they are plotting and contriving.

Of this we have striking examples now before our eyes.—The papal monarchy was most powerful: and yet, when it meditated the destruction of the kingdom of Christ, it was itself destroyed and perished: while the church, that held fast the faith of the promises, remained in safety, though it was greatly afflicted. Those therefore of the godly who have survived, have seen with their eyes the reward of the ungodly; and that a thousand fell at the church's side, and ten thousand at her right hand, while she remained safe and no destruction came nigh her.

And so also under King Hezekiah the state of the people of God was miserable. The Assyrian who had taken the Ten Tribes captive, besieged Jerusalem, after having grievously afflicted various parts of the kingdom of Judah with chains. But the Lord was all the while laughing at his vain attempts; though the afflicted church could not laugh, but was sunk into mourning and tears. But was not the laughter of God at length revealed? And did not the church also begin to laugh at length, when in one night a hundred and fourscore and five thousand were slain by the angel of the Lord? Thus the church saw at length with her bodily eyes the

vengeance of God upon the wicked. And so also the same people, when captive in Babylon, saw with their bodily eyes the destruction of Babylon.

This particule *AZ* therefore, expressive of indefinite time, is carefully to be marked, ‘*Then* shall he speak,’ or, ‘He shall *at length* speak:’ that is, when it shall seem best to him. His laughing, therefore, is in heaven and hidden, but he shall at length be heard to speak aloud upon earth. He shall speak to those singers of their song, who fill all things with their horrible clamour, while they exclaim, “Let us break their bands in sunder, and cast away their cords from us.” When he shall “speak” to these characters, they shall immediately hear him. And this will take place “then,” not ‘now,’ as we wish; but we wish for it now; because, to those who endure the cross, all delay is distressing. We therefore may wish, that God would speak ‘now,’ but he does not choose to do so: he will speak “then:” that is, when we, just sinking into despair, begin to think that he will keep silence for ever.

And now, what, or how, will he speak? Here we must pay attention to the Hebrew phrase.—When the scripture says that God speaks, it signifies, the real and effective word, or the act of God: not a sound only; like as it is when we speak. For God has no mouth nor tongue: he is a spirit. This, therefore, is called the mouth and tongue of God.—‘He spake, and they were made.’ When he speaks the mountains tremble, the kingdoms are scattered, and, in a word, the whole earth is moved. This is a speech far different from ours.

God speaks when the sun rises and when it sets: God speaks when the fruits of the earth spring forth and when men are born. The words of God, therefore, are not mere air, but mighty and wonderful works, which we see with our eyes and handle with our hands. For, (according to Moses,) when God spake and said, ‘Let there be the sun,’ ‘Let there be the moon,’ ‘Let the earth bring forth trees,’ &c. that which he said immediately took place indeed. No one heard this

voice, but we see the works and deeds themselves before our eyes, and touch them with our hands.

Here, therefore, the Holy Ghost, at the same time that he says these things, comforts the godly who are groaning and panting under the cross, and terrifies the wicked that they may not be secure, but be assured that God will at length speak. And when he speaks in wrath, there is neither end nor hope of help. For when the Lord is wrath it is not a joke or jest: but the wicked feel his word of wrath, both in the present life by various afflictions, and also in the life to come; unless they are converted and brought to repentance.

God also speaks in a way of grace when he gives peace, a fruitful year, good magistrates, and godly teachers. These are words of grace: as we have it, Psalm cxlvii. 15, "He sendeth his utterance (or commandment) upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly." And then the Psalmist shews how this is to be understood; namely, 'that God gives snow, frost, and ice,' &c.

This is a phrase peculiar to the Hebrew (to the learning of which I have often exhorted our youth, though almost in vain; because it is of the utmost importance to the understanding of the scriptures;) taken out of Moses; who, in the first chapter of Genesis, when speaking of God's creating all things out of nothing, generally speaks thus, And God said, "Let there be light," "Let there be a firmament," "and there was light," "and he made the firmament." It is from this place that this phrase is taken. And as the Romans have their Virgil, and the Greeks their Homer, in imitation of whom they write; so also the prophets rightly take their style of writing from Moses, when they speak of the works of God. For they saw that to "speak," is, with God, the same as doing; for his word is his act.

And it is a dreadful thing of which the prophet here speaks, when he says, that God shall 'speak in his wrath:' for it is certain that at this word of wrath whole

nations must be hurled to ruin together: nor can they possibly save themselves from falling by any force or power whatever. Thus, God spoke in his wrath when he sent the Romans against the holy city Jerusalem; and the same also afterwards, when he sent the Goths and Vandals against the Romans. These were great and terrible words, which cast down the mightiest monarchs. And so also, he speaks in his wrath when he sends pestilence, famine, and other plagues.

Here, therefore, will be an end of this fury of the world. They will rouse up against them the majesty of God, and compel him to speak unto them, not such words as man speaks, which only reach the ear, but such as terrify the conscience, and are terrible in the effects: namely, such as bring upon the offenders thousands of thousands of armed men, and other plagues, which utterly destroy whole kingdoms.

How much better is it to bear the yoke of Christ and not shake it off? For although it be hard to be borne by the flesh, (and the cross must be borne by all who enlist under Christ's banners, for they will have many powerful adversaries, as we have said,) yet, the Spirit brings with it consolation and peace; not a short and vain peace like that of the world, for the sake of which the world casts off this yoke, but an eternal peace. And as a father chasteneth the son whom he loveth; so Christ also ever speaks in wrath against the flesh, but always speaks in grace to the comfort of the spirit. They that will not bear this yoke and these bands, shall hear another voice: namely, they shall hear the voice of war and pestilence, and of thousands of armed men laying waste all things with fire and sword.

But God does not speak to the wicked in his wrath only, nor does the matter there end, but there follows his voice a 'vexation;' so that the enemies are immediately so distressed in their minds, that they know not which way to turn themselves. And here is the beginning of their ruin.—Such, therefore, is the Lord, that warrior that sitteth in the heavens. He at first conceals his anger and does not vent it, but laughs at the vain attempts

of the wicked; but if the wicked will not cease from afflicting the godly, he begins the battle. He does not wound their hands or their feet, or pluck out their eyes, but vexes their minds: and when this is done, a few, and those unarmed, can vanquish them.

And moreover, when David says that the Lord shall speak, it is thence manifest that the wicked are incorrigible, and will not suffer themselves to be healed by those who bring unto them the Word of the Lord, which is the the Word of grace. For if they would hearken unto the Word, and would permit themselves to be taught, they would cast away this desire and rage after persecuting and opposing God and his Word. But as they will not hear the Word, but securely fight against it, and despise the doctrine of it, they are compelled at length to hear another voice, which is the voice of wrath, and which awaits all the enemies of the Word. For as men will not be converted, but, being blind, will enforce their own doctrines and inventions, therefore, this verse must be fulfilled in them, 'God shall speak in his wrath and vex all the impenitent.'

And by these examples of the enemies of the Word of God, we are taught, that wherever the Word is, there certain calamity and destruction must follow, on account of those who set themselves against the Word: and yet, the Word, amidst all this ruin and destruction of the world, is not ruined, but stands as firm as ever. The church shall ever stand, how afflicted and small-soever it may be. For this King shall not therefore cease to be King, because the wicked are vexed and destroyed. But he speaks in his wrath, to the very end that he may vex his enemies, and that his Word and church may remain unhurt. And thus the church shall remain through the power of God: it shall suffer but shall not fall, but shall stand for ever. Nay, it shall even gain strength and grow under the cross. And hence, the Psalm goes on to speak of her enemies as being now driven far away, of the victory of the Word, and the majesty of her King.

Ver. 6.—*Yet have I set my King upon Zion, my holy mountain.*

Here you have a positive declaration. The Divine Majesty threatens that he will overturn and destroy all those who oppose his Word, and promises that he will yet preserve his King, Christ, and his kingdom, that is, his Word. But all these things can be apprehended by faith alone, and not by the flesh or carnal sense. For the flesh cannot believe that all things are placed in that one Man Jesus, who was born of Mary; and that, on his account only, the whole world must fall and perish, rather than that the least injury should be done to his kingdom. For if the kings and princes of the world believed this, they would take care for themselves, and would embrace him, and would not hate and attempt to suppress him. But because they believe not this, and because they look at visible things only, that is, their power and their riches, and neglect and despise the things that are invisible, that is, the Word, they rush on in blindness one after the other until they all perish together. Examples of this are abundant both in the ages that are past and in the present day. For Christ is, as Daniel saith, ‘that mountain that filleth the world: and they that set themselves against him shall be ground to powder.’ And Christ himself saith, Luke xx. 18, “Who-soever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.”

Nor is it any new thing to declare this of Christ at the present day: for we have the four monarchies before our eyes, which we behold all lying in the dust because they obstinately resisted this King. On the other hand, the church, which throughout every age has been terribly afflicted by the world, still remains as firm as ever, and goes on increasing, rejoicing, and praising God, and declaring his benefits in the teeth of Satan and the world raging with anger and indignation: and all this is because of this verse: where Satan sees, ‘that this King is anointed of God, and set upon his holy hill of Zion.’ Let him that will, attempt to hurl him down

from thence. We, in the mean time, go on rejoicing and giving thanks unto God, that all the efforts of Satan and the world are in vain. And therefore resting in this verse, we despise Satan and all his attempts, and laugh at him.

In this passage, therefore, you will observe first, the person speaking, that is, the eternal God the Father: and then, the person spoken of, that is, God the Son: and thirdly, the words themselves, which are spoken by the Holy Ghost. These three things being diligently observed, thou mayest set them against all those things that are spoken against these divine persons, and against this passage, and despise them as nothing at all. For when this verse is rightly considered, it so fills heaven and earth, that nothing else, how great and splendid soever it might be before the world, can be seen.

For who is this that saith "I?" Is it not the Lord of heaven and earth, who made all things out of nothing by the power of his word? Compare with him, then, the world and all the power of the world, and what will it be, and what can it do, against this Lord? Was not the world made by his word? Therefore, the world shall be reduced to nothing and destroyed by the word of God, if he so will! Here then it is the same Lord of all, the only eternal, only wise, only just, only almighty God, that says, "I have set my King!"

And consider this Person of Christ. The world has its kings also who govern by divine authority: as Paul saith, 'All power is of God.' And yet they are, as Peter says, human creatures; that is, they are set and appointed by human ordinance, and have the charge of external and corporal things also. But the King here spoken of is our Lord Jesus Christ; set and ordained immediately by the eternal Father himself to be King: and he is called the Father's King ("my King") or, appointed King by the Father. "I (says the Father) have set my King." Hence he distinguishes him from all the kings of the world. For although God appoints all other kings also, as Paul saith, 'All power is of God:' yet he does not call other kings, '*his* Kings.' This, there-



fore, is that especial and peculiar King whom the Lord and eternal Father has appointed and ordained as King for himself: and hence, all other kings must do him reverence, observe him, embrace him, and, as David says in the last part of the Psalm, " Kiss " him, as being that jewel and precious stone, compared with which, all other kings and kingdoms are but as bricks and dirt.

But why, and to what purpose, was the particular place mentioned, when it is said, that ' Christ was appointed and set as King upon the holy mountain Zion ! This is a thing particularly to be remarked : for the Holy Ghost therefore mentioned the corporal Zion, that we may be assured that this King is appointed from above, and is a real Man, and (so to speak) a constituted person, who may be comprehended and clearly understood. For we are not to follow the foolish imagination of those who hide themselves in corners, and undertake to perform some corporal exercises, and expect that God will there speak with them ; and who would have us believe that every thing which they think or dream are prophecies and rays of the Holy Spirit: for this is all the erroneous folly of the monks. But if God had been pleased to teach us, and speak with us, and illuminate us, in this manner, he would not have appointed and ordained a certain Person, nor a certain place upon earth, from which we might expect that certain Person, his King, and hear him. But now, he has most certainly appointed and made known a certain Person and place. The Person is the Son of God, and he is King in Zion ; that is, the Son of David, and the heir of David ; and who was promised to David, to be the King of the circumcised people over whom David reigned. We are, therefore, to expect this Man to teach in Zion, and to reveal himself in Zion, because he is appointed of God to be King of Zion.

But in this Zion there is a figure. For, by Zion, we are not to understand the wood and stones of Zion, but those who inhabit Zion. And even this is only the corporal Zion ; and it teaches us that we should expect that King, who is called King of Zion. For if you

understand by Zion the material Zion, it is all over with us gentiles, because we do not possess this mountain now, it is in the hands of the wicked Hagarenes. But now, all our salvation and consolation lies in this,—that we have the King of Zion, and confess him, and embrace him; even that King, who is appointed King on the holy mountain; that is, who was promised to David, and ordained, as the angel told Mary, ‘to rule over the house of Jacob for ever, and to sit upon the throne of his Father David.’ And as God the Father himself gave this promise to David, Christ is rightly said to be set by God himself as King on mount Zion, where David reigned.

This, therefore, is the title of our King which is written on the diadem with which the eternal Father himself crowned him to be King of Zion, on mount Zion, in the city of Jerusalem, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in due time of the Virgin Mary. And of this all the prophets prophesied, saying, that he should have his throne on mount Zion, as the Son and the heir of David. Thus Zechariah ix. 9, “Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: for behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” And Isaiah ii. 3, “For out of Zion shall go forth a law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” And Psalm cx. 2, “The Lord shall send the rod of his kingdom out of Zion.” And Isaiah lix. 20, “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion.” Obadiah i. 17, “But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance.”

The Holy Spirit, therefore, administers to us this consolation amidst all the tumults and hatred of the world and the devil. As if he had said, ‘Fear not, little flock: bear with and endure all these injuries. Let the world go on to boast of its power and its forces, until the day of wrath shall arrive and overwhelm the impenitent. My kingdom, meanwhile, shall remain unmoved, for I have appointed my King. He was not appointed by them; and, as they did not appoint my King, so, they cannot cast him down.’

But why does he call Zion the “holy mountain?” for the mountain itself was nothing but stones and wood:

and the people that inhabited it were flesh and blood, like the inhabitants of all other places, nations, and cities. Would not this title have been much more appropriately applied to that mountain on which the temple and worship were?—I answer, I have often observed, that there is nothing more difficult for us to believe than that we are saints. For the offences and the known infirmities which we feel, both in ourselves and others, prevent us from so doing. As, therefore, others cannot be brought to think of us, that we are saints; so also, neither do we dare to take this honour to ourselves, nor consider ourselves to be saints. But however, this honour of holiness ought neither to be taken from us, nor from others who are of the true church. For as we are accustomed to call an honourable member of society a good man, and a good housewife a good woman; so, in the true church, the appellation of ‘holy’ ought to be commonly applied to us. But, as I said, our known and felt infirmity, in ourselves and others, so offends us, that we dare not do it. For as we are flesh and blood, and as we do not walk upon the clouds, but are engaged much in common occupations, both domestic and civil, these objects hide and obscure, as it were, our holiness. It is most useful, therefore, that we be rightly informed concerning this point of holiness.

Mount Zion, then, or the people that inhabited mount Zon, had a twofold holiness; or, the people were called holy on a twofold account.

First, because it had the Word and worship of God: by this Word the stones and the wood, and even the persons themselves, were sanctified: so that, if any one killed a Jew, he was said to have killed a holy man: not on account of the person of the man itself, but on account of the place and people, because they had the Word of God: nay, on account of God himself dwelling in Jerusalem and sanctifying it.

Secondly, there was another and greater holiness. Because, as God himself dwelt in the midst of this people by his Word, the true church was among this people only; which church is made holy through faith,

and no how and nowhere else. For the saints of old knew that the blessed Seed would come, and that the Son of God, becoming incarnate, would offer himself a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. And by this faith, through this blessed Seed, they received the remission of sins and the Holy Ghost, and were thus truly sanctified. And on account of these truly sanctified ones, although they were so few, the whole people were called holy, because, that was the only people among whom sanctified or holy men lived. This is the greater and more true holiness, concerning which we have spoken before.

So also among us the fourth commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' sanctifies this life. So that I might rightly say, a father is holy, a mother is holy, a magistrate is holy: that is, they are holy by that general holiness: because the commandment is holy and divine, which binds us to obedience. And this commandment is such, that it binds, not one people only, but all people. This divine ordinance, therefore, pervades all nations. But, after this, when a father, or a mother, or a magistrate, becomes a Christian, then they have another holiness: not that general holiness, but an especial and spiritual holiness, because they are sanctified by faith in the promise, and by the Holy Ghost.

In the same manner this mount Zion was a holy mountain: first by a legal holiness: because the Word, and the legal ceremonies of worship were there. And then also it was holy by a holiness of grace, because it had the promise of the remission of sins through the Seed that should come: which Seed afterwards came, and was spread abroad throughout the whole world; but before it came, it was believed by the saints of old, and embraced and possessed by faith.

But the true nature and meaning of it is, that mount Zion is called holy, not from itself, nor from its people, but from its King himself. Not from the inhabitant David, but from Christ, who sanctifies all that believe in him: that is, by forgiving them their sins and giving them the Holy Ghost.

Thus far, then, has the prophet taught us concerning the appointed and declared King of Zion: who is called a seditious King, and his doctrine seditious. But all this sedition does not proceed from his own fault, but from the fault of the world: that is, of the kings, people, and rulers, and of the wise, the holy, the religious, who are offended at him, and therefore begin to rage and raise seditions.

This prophecy, therefore, that foretels that the kingdom of Christ shall be attended with all this sedition and tumult, is not very joyful; yet it is necessary, in order to confirm our minds, that we may not be cast down, when we see all these things going on, and we ourselves, and our King, and our doctrine, accused of being seditious: for we have in the midst of all this peril, a defender and a justifier; even him who here speaks and says, "I have set my King upon my holy mountain Zion."

This is our sole consolation, therefore, to which we cleave, nay, in which we stand and even glory, putting away out of our sight and utterly despising, all kings and rulers, and all nations and people, with all their power and all their strength. For this "I" is stronger, wiser, and mightier than them all. He, therefore, will uphold and preserve his King against all the fury of the world. And while he is preserved, we his subjects are preserved also. Therefore, we are to stand in these invisible things which this Psalm sets forth, and disregard all those things that are visible.

The prophet, having thus described the place or seat of this King, now goes on to shew his office: that we may not only know where he is, but also what we are to expect from him and what he is to do.

*Ver. 7.—I will declare the decree which the Lord hath said unto me;—Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

These words are common enough, and sufficiently known in all the churches and monasteries: but they are by no means so commonly known to be of such weight, and to contain things so momentously important. For,

to speak of the whole in a few words, we have here the whole law abrogated, and the office of Christ most purely described,—that he shall not bear the sword, nor set up any new political government; but that he shall be a teacher, who shall teach men a certain before-unheard-of and eternal decree of God!

Therefore, though other kings necessarily make laws and govern by laws, yet their principle office is not to make or teach laws, but to punish the evil with the sword, and to defend the good. Therefore, they are, as it were, God's hangmen and executioners. For thus Paul saith, 'that they bear the sword for a terror to the evil, and for the inflicting of punishment.' Therefore, their proper office is not to teach, because they know not the consciences nor the hearts, but only rule the hands. And as a herdsman manages swine; and feeds them according to the direction of his five senses; so kings are pastors of the world, and govern, not the consciences, but the bodies; in the same way as beasts are governed.

But our King, concerning whom the Holy Spirit is here prophesying, is a King ordained, and from all eternity set up of God, to teach. Therefore, he is at the same time a Priest, a Prophet, and a Teacher, who instructs all his disciples concerning God, and governs the consciences.

This is the difference in which our King differs from all other kings, and it is most diligently to be observed. For Satan's perpetual care and indefatigable aim is to confound this kingdom with the kingdom of the world, and to make a Christ, who is a ruler and teacher of consciences, a worldly king. But Christ leaves all these things to the kings of the world, and says to his own, "But ye shall not be so," Luke xxii. 26. For the kingdom of Christ stands in the Word, and his office is to teach: he leaves to the kings of the world the care of the swine: and they are furnished with a sceptre or staff to drive the swine here and there. But the office of Christ is, as this Psalm here speaks, 'to preach and declare the eternal decree of God.'

This is a most clear definition and description of the

kingdom of Christ here given us, with its proper difference from the kingdoms of the world: but there are but few who apprehend it. There is perpetually cleaving to the minds of all that pestilent mingling of both kingdoms: so that it is a difficult matter even to spiritual men to distinguish rightly, and at all times, this kingdom from the kingdom of the world: but they that do, and know that there is another life after this,—these see that they have need of kings and magistrates in order to the well being of this life, but they go unto Christ, and make use of him for the other and eternal life that is to come.

And here, let not the change of persons in this passage at all move the reader, for it is a usage most frequent in the Hebrew language. So that, when they say, in the Hebrew, ‘May the Lord, my King, live,’ they say nothing else than, ‘Mayest thou, O Lord, my King, live.’ So also in this place, if you set aside the change of persons, the sense and meaning of the passage will be more easy and plain ‘I have set my King upon my holy mountain Zion, that he might declare the decree,—that he is my Son, whom I have to-day begotten.’ But the holy scripture has its own peculiar manner of expression, to which we must always accustom ourselves, even though it may sometimes cause the meaning to be more obscure: as we have it, Psalm xci. 9, “The Lord is his hope: thou hast made the Most High thy refuge:” which would have been more clear, if he had used the second person in the first clause, thus, “The Lord is thy hope: thou hast made the Most High thy refuge.”

And to one who diligently considers the matter, it will be found that this change of persons is not altogether without its peculiar force. For how much more weighty is it in this place, when God makes the King himself ‘to declare the decree of God.’ For, as I said before, the design of the passage is, to shew that this King is also a Teacher. And then, the Holy Spirit has this design also,—to shew us, that God does all things by the Son. For while the Son declares the decree, the Father, who is in the Son, or, who is one with the Son, declares it

also. And while we declare or preach concerning the same decree, Christ himself declares it also; as he saith, "He that heareth you heareth me."

This word "decree" *hoc*, is of a very extensive meaning; it signifies, for the most part, a ceremony: but in this passage it signifies a certain new kind of doctrine. For as Moses delivered many ceremonies, and as the kings of the earth have their laws and statutes: this King also comes with a certain statute differing from all the statutes of Moses, and of all other kings.

This decree, therefore, is to be understood as that which abrogates all laws, even those of Moses himself, as being unavailable unto the attainment of eternal salvation. When, therefore, the matter before us is about eternal life, the forgiveness of sins, death, and, in a word, all those things which pertain to the conscience; here, let Moses be silent, let all laws and all kings hold their peace; and let this King and Teacher alone be heard, who, it is here promised, shall "declare" this "decree."

And here, diligently remark the circumstances of time.—When this prophecy was written by David, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the law was in its full vigour, and the Mosaical priesthood in its most flourishing state. If, therefore, this King should not bring forth any other doctrine than Moses did, this promise is utterly void, and the law of Moses only will still remain.

What kind of a doctrine, then, is this? and what "decree" is this which Christ was to "declare?" Why, certainly this, "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son." Of this verse the Apostle Paul is a great and mighty interpreter in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans; when he says, 'That God promised the Gospel concerning his Son long before, by his prophets, in the holy scriptures; who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.'

This is that new doctrine which, as this Psalm saith,



was to be diffused throughout the world by the Son of God. The old doctrine was that of Moses, 'Fear God,' 'Trust in God,' 'Love God, and thy neighbour as thyself.' But the doctrine here declared is far more excellent: for it does not teach us what we should do: this is the proper office of the law, which requires of us certain works, which if you fulfil not, it denounces the wrath of God: and therefore, it can do nothing but terrify, alarm, and distress us, and suffers us not to rest: because it is utterly out of our power to perform that which it requires. But this King and Teacher is not such an one; he does not demand our works from us, but gives his own works to us. He does not teach us what we are, (for that is the office of the law,) but who he is, that we may embrace him, and enjoy his free gifts, even though we cannot perform what the law of Moses requires.

The doctrine of this King, therefore, is distinct from all other doctrines, and even from the law itself; which law, however, in as far as it teaches concerning works, or concerning that which we ought to do, is most perfect. But the doctrine of this King does not teach concerning works, but concerning the Person to whom the Lord said, "Thou art my Son."

This is very short, and very purely and simply set forth, without any amplification and without any attending circumstances: but if you consider these few words rightly, the amplifications and circumstances will present themselves of their own accord, and the Gospel sets them all forth, which describes this Person fully and clearly; teaching us, that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, and died, that he was raised up again from death by his own power, that he now sits at the right hand of God the Father, and that we are commanded to hear him, and to fix our eyes on him alone, as the Jews fixed their eyes upon the brazen serpent only in the wilderness, and that we are never to turn aside from his words. And the same Gospel declares, that, whatever he speaks or does, is all for our salvation;

and that we are so to receive it. For this is the whole design of the Gospel: and therefore, it sets forth both the miracles and the sermons of Christ most particularly, to the end that it might in all things commend him unto us, and that it might invite us to embrace, follow, and obey him. And while we do this we shall never err, but hold fast the right way of salvation.

This, therefore, is a more glorious and more excellent doctrine than the law, which only teaches us what we ought to do. And yet the Gospel does not cast away or make void the law: for the law is also the voice of God, which all must obey. But the Gospel still retaining and establishing the law teaches us something higher. For as no one can obey the law, the Gospel "declares" concerning the Son of God, whom the Father has begotten "to-day;" that is, from all eternity, and set as King upon Zion: that is, he willed that he should be born Man and teach. Here, therefore, our minds are raised up to hear this King only, and to observe his works.

Therefore, the highest article of our faith is to know that the son of Mary is the eternal Son of God, sent by the Father to preach and not to fight, for he has power in his mouth, but not a sword in his hand. And the sum of his doctrine is this, when he says, 'God the Eternal Father begat me from all eternity.'—This is the grand and chief article of our faith; and the grand and chief article of the Gospel: and therefore it is that Satan so furiously attacks it by Arius and his impious posterity. Nor does Satan cease to shake this doctrine in our hearts continually. For whence arise the dread, the tears, the groans, and the complaints of the godly, but from this,—because this article is not yet firmly fixed in our minds? For if we were assured for certain that this Jesus is the Son of God, why should we fear? seeing that, he stands up for our advocate, and was sent by the Father expressly for our benefit. But now we are tried and distressed by our sins, we fear death, we dread damnation; and on this account,—because our conscience doubts whether Christ be the Son of God. For if we

truly believed this, we should despise sin as a thing of naught; and we should laugh at death and Satan as conquered and prostrate enemies. For what are sins, or what are death and Satan, when compared to the Son of God! But because we do not believe this, the defect is not in the Teacher or in his Word, but in ourselves, because we are utterly unbelieving, or because we are weak in faith.

This, therefore, is the doctrine of our King.—He ‘declares,’ that the eternal God has declared from all eternity, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”—You see, therefore, that here there is nothing of our things or works set forth; (for that is the work of the law;) but only this Son of God, with his Word, and his works.

But that this text may not in any way be eluded, let the words be weighed.—“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”—God is out of, and before all time; he is of a spiritual nature; therefore, he can beget nothing that is temporal, or that that is corporeal, from himself; but he begets the like of himself; that is, one that is eternal and spiritual. And as these words were spoken to that Person who was appointed King in Zion, and who was born of the Virgin Mary; does it not follow, that this man, who was, in time, born of the Virgin Mary, existed before he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and that from all eternity! For “to-day,” with God, as we shall hereafter shew, has neither beginning nor end. Thus in this Person are united, according to the passage before us, both divinity and humanity: so that you may rightly say, this Man is God!

This truth, therefore, which is thus set forth in this Psalm, let us hold fast against all the tongues of Satan in his instruments which have endeavoured to undermine and shake it. Nay, let us hold it fast also against all the foolishness of our own reason. For when foolish men begin to dispute about the perfection of infinite Majesty, they fall and are precipitated headlong into blasphemy, like Lucifer falling from heaven. For what thoughts can

we poor miserable creatures have concerning such great things if we once depart from the Word? Let us rather follow this Psalm which has now, for above three thousand years, stood firm and uncorrupt against all heresies; and which plainly and roundly declares that this King is both Man and eternal God. Let us with our hearts assent to this definition and assertion; and whatever we may hear of or think of ourselves that is contrary to them, let us execrate and condemn as fanatical, blasphemous, and devised of Satan.

The infamous Arius bore with the *name* Son of God: but then, he still held and defended his blasphemous doctrine,—that, by the same reason, we also were sons of God. But how much more right was Paul, who says, that we are sons by adoption, but that this Person was a Son by nature? And therefore he calls him the *εικων*, or “image, of the invisible God.”—And then how appropriately and weightily does he introduce the testimony of this Psalm, when he says, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, “Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?” Here he extols this King even above the nature of angels, who, nevertheless, hold the first place among God’s creatures. And rightly does he so: because the angels and archangels themselves were made by the Son of God. And hence, the same Apostle calls the Son *πρωτοκων πασης κτισεως*, the first begotten of all creatures; that he might place him distinct from, and above, the angels and the whole creation.

In this simplicity let us live, and let us not venture upon that vast and deep sea of disputation about things so immensely great and immeasurably high. For this important article is very slippery; first, because of its subtle intricacy; and then, because of our infirmity. Therefore, it is the height of folly, and a most perilous attempt, to wish to search too deeply into these high things. For if we could do this, we should have no need of the scriptures; nay, we should have no need of this Teacher and King. For they that disregard the scriptures, and attack such mighty things with a pre-

sumptuous confidence in their own abilities,—these would become teachers of God, and not his disciples. And therefore, like Phaeton, who attempted to govern the sun, they are precipitated headlong and perish.

Of this rashness God complains when he says by the prophet, ‘To whom will ye liken me?’ For this is the exact way with all hypocrites, heretics, and sects,—they form to themselves some image or likeness of God. Thus, the monk confesses with his mouth that he believes that Christ is the Son of God, but he frames out to his imagination something of what he considers this Son to be: namely, that he is one who approves of a hooded cloak and cowl, and a singular kind of life, and that he will give eternal life to all who live such a life. But, O hypocrite! who told thee to frame out to thy imagination such a Son of God as that? Who assured thee that God would be pleased with a Son of such an imagination?

The monk, therefore, when he lives the most strictly according to his rule is not one degree better, nor one degree less a madman, than the Arian, who says that there is but one God. The monk, however, confesses that Christ is the Son of God, and the most perfect and first-begotten of all creatures; and by whom all other creatures were made. If then Christ be the Son of God, and if we are to rest and trust in him alone, because God sent him to be a Saviour, why does the monk tack to him the opinion, that he is pleased with all those works of man’s own invention?

All these evils arise from men neglecting and disregarding the Word, and entering into speculations concerning God. For every speculator is an image-maker, and frames and fashions out that which has no real existence; for he follows his own reason only: whereas, in all things he ought to follow the Word only: for reason can neither embrace such great and high things as these, nor conquer nor overcome its own imaginations concerning them.

Therefore, with respect to this passage, what we have to do is to believe and confess with this Psalm, that

Christ, who is Teacher and King in Zion, is the Son of God, begotten of his Father from eternity, and above and beyond all creatures: and therefore he is not a creature, with respect to this nativity, but he is, as Athanasius rightly says, 'Begotten, not made.'

Here, if reason withstands thee, and cogitations begin to arise, such as those of the Turks, 'Are there, then, two Gods?' Do thou answer, 'No! There is but One God; and yet, he is the Father and the Son.' And if the cogitation say, 'But how is this?' Answer thou with humility, 'I know not: for God will not have these things seen with our eyes: he has only set them before us in his Word, and will have them believed upon that testimony alone.' As long as we do thus we err not; for we follow that light which God himself has lighted up: whereas our own reason is utterly blind and cannot see such great and high things.

Here again the persons are changed; for Christ could have said, 'I am the Son of God,' &c. But the words are set forth as spoken by the Father: and this is done that all things may be referred to the Father as the author. For in the same manner Christ also is accustomed in all his sermons to set forth the authority of the Father, and to say, that he speaks according to the mind of the Father, and that the Father does all the things that he does. He does not say that he does any thing according to his own will, but according to the commandment of the Father, that all may acknowledge the Father, believe in the Father, and preach and proclaim the Father, through Christ. This is the peculiar manner of this Teacher; and this is what the Holy Ghost designed to set forth in this place, when he makes these words to be spoken by the Father; and yet shews, that the King here spoken of is the Teacher: for he designs, like Christ, to bring us through Christ unto the Father.

And this also is intended to comfort our minds: for our conscience feels a fear and a dread even of the name of God; because it feels its sins, and fears God's anger: and therefore it dreads the voice of God, and would rather hear the voice of the Turk or of Satan. And this

feeling is beautifully set forth in the history of the giving of the law, when the people cried out unto Moses, "Let not the Lord speak with us lest we die : but speak thou unto us." For as the majesty of God cannot be seen with the eyes, so our ears also cannot bear his words.

This Christ sees ; and therefore, whatever he says, or whatever he does, he refers to God the Father, that he may shake off all this terror from our minds, and remove that distressing spectacle from our eyes, which our own imaginations continually set before us. For what is there in Christ that is not full of consolation, and sweet, and lovely ? When, therefore, you see him hang upon the cross, when you see him sweating blood, when, I say, you see all this, and refer it all, according to the words of Christ, to the will of God, will not the name of God, which is otherwise terrible, hereupon grow sweet ? Yea ! thou wilt not only not fear any thing from God, who has thus sent his Son for thy sake, but thou wilt be filled with a certain hope of his mercy and love toward thee !

This is the design of the introduction of the Father in the present passage, where the Holy Spirit has set him forth as speaking these words, "Thou art my Son." And Christ sets forth every where the authority and will of the Father ; not on his own account, as if he needed it so to be done ; but on account of our conscience, that we may be assured that we have a Mediator, who is our advocate, and intercedes for us before God, who loves us, and who died for us, and that, according to the eternal will of the Father.

This is a new kind of teaching unknown to the world, and utterly hidden from the wicked, but well known to the godly : for these latter willingly hear this King of Zion, who, although he teaches himself, yet teaches us the Word which the Father speaks. "The Lord (says he) said unto me, Thou art my Son." As if he had said, My doctrine is not mine. I only proclaim and declare that which is said unto me. He, therefore, that heareth me, heareth the Father : for although I declare it myself, yet I do not declare it :

but the same Word that the Father thinks, that I speak.

This is useful for us to learn; in order that we may not think that the Father is otherwise minded towards us than the Son declares him to be. The Son, as he died for us, most certainly cannot hate us; and thou art to assure thyself and believe the same concerning the Father: for the voice of Christ is the voice of the invisible Father, because the Son speaks from the mouth of the Father; and so also the Father speaks from the mouth of the Son; for the Father and the Son are one. And so also, although the Persons be different, (that is, the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father,) yet, their will is the same, and their Word is the same.

And this passage has this intent also,—that we may not depart from Christ in our thoughts, to seek, and hear, and call upon, the Father without him. But, as Christ said to Philip, let us be assured, that, when we behold, and hear, and call upon, and worship, Christ, we behold, hear, call upon, and worship, the Father also. Let us therefore cleave to this teacher, and not suffer ourselves to be drawn away from his Word. For what we hear from him we hear from the eternal and invisible Father also: nor is there any other God beside this Christ: nor is the will of God to be sought any where else. They, therefore, that indulge in their own cogitations concerning God and his will, lose God altogether. Hence, when the Holy Spirit here says, “The Lord said unto me,” it is to be understood of the true divinity: and it is thus that the passage is adduced as a testimony in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

And now, concerning this expression “*To-day* have I begotten thee,” there have been various disputations among teachers. Some expound it as referring to the nativity of Christ; others concerning the resurrection and the time of the New Testament. But let us keep to the ῥητον, or literal expression. The Hebrew verb, then, signifies properly ‘to beget.’ But we cannot, in this place, understand it of the natural or temporal nativity (for this is not spoken concerning men,



but God), it signifies, therefore, the eternal and invisible nativity.

This verb and expression, therefore, are such as cannot be understood or comprehended by human reason. The Son 'declares' it unto us, but unless we believe it we shall never understand it: for it is an expression brought forth unto us out of that unapproachable light in which God dwells. It is clearly understood when it is spoken to men, concerning men; but when the eternal Father, who is a Spirit, makes use of this expression, and thus speaks to the Son, it cannot be understood.

You see in this same passage a twofold preaching or declaration. The first is internal, when the Lord, or God the Father, speaks to the Son. This, we neither hear nor understand: it is only understood by him that speaks, and by him to whom it was spoken. The other declaration is external, when the Son speaks to us, and says, "The Lord said unto me, 'Thou art my Son.'" This we hear, indeed, but still we understand it not, it can be apprehended by faith only.—I understand this passage, therefore, concerning the *eternal generation!*

The arguments of Augustine do not displease me; where he compares the verb of the perfect tense to an adverb of the present tense; and says, that, before God, there is neither past nor future: but that, out of time, and in eternity, all things are present.—And yet, the Holy Spirit chose to use a perfect tense, to denote the perfect completion of the nativity. For, if we wished to express the matter as it really is, and in tenses applicable to it, we must say, The Son of God is being born, and is born, to-day, daily, and for ever: for eternity has neither past nor future.

This is the manner in which we are to understand "to-day," as it respects God, but not as it respects us. For here God is not speaking with us, but with him who is out of, and above, all time, and with God. We, indeed, have all the various divisions and differences of time: one is to-day, another is yesterday, another is to-morrow: but eternity knows not these differences. In eternity there is no time at all, neither past, nor future,

but all is “*to-day* :” as Peter saith, 2 Epist. iii. 8, “One day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” The beginning, the end, and the middle of time are, with God, as one moment.

We, however, speak these words and use these expressions like parrots ; for we are creatures of time, or, (to speak more truly,) creatures of a short moment of time. For, what we have been, is gone by, and what we shall be we possess not now : so that, of time we possess but one momentary space, and that is the present moment. This adverb “*to-day*,” therefore, refers to the eternal nativity of the Son : and this manifestly proves that he is not a creature : because he was born “*to-day*,” that is, from, and to, all eternity : without beginning and without end, and (so to speak) in an all-present nativity !

And, as I have before observed, if you compare the things here declared,—that this same Son is born from all eternity, and yet, is King in Zion, it will follow, that he has a twofold nativity, one out of time and another in time ; and also, that the Person who was born of the Virgin Mary, is truly God and truly Man.

But how this *came* to pass, or how it *could* come to pass,—beware that thou reason not with subtle disputation. In simple faith follow the Word which makes known to us such great and high things, and flee from all disputations. For it is not a mere fiction of men, when it is said, concerning that Man who was born of Mary, that he is God, and that he is begotten of the eternal Father : it is a thing which the scripture alone declares to us. Let us therefore believe it, as an article sent down to us and revealed to us from above, without any invention of man. Nor let us imagine that such great things were ever invented by our lying spirit ; for we possess but one short moment of time, and, of eternity, have no understanding whatever.

We have, therefore, set forth in this Psalm, the principal and most important articles of our faith ; namely, who and what kind of a person Christ, the King, is,—that he is begotten of the Father from all eternity, and set by him on mount Zion. And we have also set forth

unto us what his kingdom is,—that he is a Teacher far above the law of Moses. For he teaches us not concerning our works, but concerning himself, that he is the eternal Son of God the Father ; in order that he might encourage us to embrace him, and to trust with full confidence in his works and merits.

He that receives and believes these things, to him this King will shortly manifest himself, by his word and works. Then his word and his works thou shalt not despise, nor disregard ; but thou shalt know that he is the Son of God. Thou shalt behold also his works, and hear of them with the greatest joy,—that he was made Man, and suffered the death of the cross, and that he himself raised himself from the dead. And thou shalt be assured that he did not these things for himself : for, as he was the Son of God, he stood in no need of such things at all : but he did the whole for thy sake, that thou mightest be delivered from sin and from the snares and tyranny of death and Satan. Trust, therefore, in this King, and by him thou shall be assured that thou hast eternal life : for all these things shall follow when thou hast firmly got hold of this article,—that Christ is the eternal Son of God !

But they that do not hold firmly this article,—they, if they magnify Christ at all, do it like the Turks, and make him a mere prophet ; or, like the Pope, they magnify not his word and his works, but seek out to themselves some other helps and refuges, from which they may derive a hope of remission of sins and eternal life. These, indeed, know that he was born of the Virgin Mary, and that he suffered under Pontius Pilate. But all these things are, to them, as a bare history : they are not thereby excited unto faith, nor do they therefrom derive the certain hope of salvation : but, they read the history of Christ just as they do the histories of the kings of Judah and Israel, and know nothing more about it. And it cannot be otherwise than that the whole Gospel must be made a mere history, when this capital and main article concerning the nativity of Christ,

and the real meaning and nature of it, are altogether lost. For on this all the rest depends. They, therefore, that hold fast this, look not upon the words and works of Christ as mere dead histories, but as living facts; and as set forth unto us by the Son of God, that we may embrace them and live.

Attend, therefore, to this verse most diligently —“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” The words, indeed, are few, but they are of infinite weight: and they cannot be comprehended by reason: for as soon as ever reason obtrudes herself beyond time and temporal things, she immediately becomes blind and stupified, and has neither sight nor understanding. Faith, therefore, is the thing that is here necessary: but let reason, as Paul saith concerning the women in the church, say nothing, but hold her peace.

As the Holy Spirit, therefore, has now thus far taught us concerning this King, *a priori*, (as we say,) or, (if we may so speak) as to the efficient cause,—that he is begotten of the eternal Father: so also the same Holy Spirit now goes on to describe him *a posteriori*, and shews from the very effects that this King is not only Man, but God also.

Ver. 8.—*Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

These things also are to be referred to the description of the same kingdom and Person.

Arius has caught hold of this passage also, and turned it to overthrow the Divinity of Christ. ‘If (says he) Christ be by nature God, he must have been, before this gift here mentioned, the Lord of the heathen and of the earth. But here he asks them as one inferior to God, and receives that as a gift which he had not before. Therefore, he is not God, but a most perfect creature; and hence it is that he has the name of, and is called, the Son of God.’ Thus the subtle minds of these disputers, when they have once suffered themselves

to be drawn away from the Word, and to depend upon their own imaginations, are but mere workshops and forges of the devil.

But let us rather invert the whole of this argument, and draw this conclusion.—This Son is appointed Lord of the ends of the earth and of the whole creation. Therefore it follows, that he is by nature God. For the Lord himself says, ‘My glory I will not give to another.’ Yet he gives his glory to this Person: therefore, he does not give it to “another,” but to one equal to himself, that is, to God. And yet, a difference of Persons remains: for there is one Person that gives, and another Person that asks to have it given him: or rather, who is commanded to ask to have it given him. But why is this? If he be God, why does he not take that himself which is his own? What need is there to ask?—I answer: The Psalm is not speaking of the Son of God, as he was from all eternity: for, in that sense, he was, from all eternity, Lord of the creation, and receives nothing, but himself possesses all things. But the Psalm is speaking of the King of Zion, that is, the incarnate Son, the Man born of the Virgin Mary, who began his kingdom, as a Man, in the corporal Zion, by the preaching of the Gospel. To this Man, who was made lower than the angels, he delivers the rules of the gentiles, that all may obey *him*, and all hope for the remission of sins and eternal life through him. And the Son is commanded to ask this rule and power that reverence and ineffable humility may be done every where to the Father. For the Son does not obtrude, and would not take the kingdom of himself: he remains in the humiliation of the cross: as he saith, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart:” he waits till the Father shall exalt him.

This, therefore, is exactly the manner of speaking contained in the Gospel of John; that is, Christ’s own way of speaking. For just in this way he was accustomed to say, “My Father is greater than I.” “The words that I speak are not mine.” “The Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” For he always brings

forth the Father as the author of all, and refers all to him; and that he does, not only to terrify and deter the wicked, but to console the godly; as we have just before observed.

Learn, therefore, Christian reader, to press home this verse against the Arian.—Christ has received dominion over the heathen, but he has so received it as being himself all the while Lord of all: that by him the gentiles might receive righteousness, judgment, goodness, and truth; as is testified in the 89th Psalm. These are things which are not in the power even of angels: for none but God himself can justify and forgive sins: none but God can deliver from death and eternal damnation: none but God himself can give the Holy Spirit: none but God is true. When, therefore, the Son is commanded to diffuse these things throughout the nations, who does not see that he must be naturally God? For these are not works of the creature: and yet this Person to whom all these things are attributed, is the “seed of David,” and holds the throne of his father David.

As therefore the word, “I will give,” is to the Arians full of offence, so it is to us full of consolation. For as the Son of David appeared in our flesh as the Son of David, this word has reference to that declaration which Paul makes, Rom. i.—that Christ is declared to be the only begotten Son of God, *because* he has received all things from the Father.

In this same manner the expression “ask of me,” does not offend us, but builds us upon our faith: and teaches us that, when we would ask any thing of God, we are not to run unto him without reverence, like the heathen, the Turks, and the Jews, as unto a God whom we know not, but that we are to betake ourselves unto the Son, the Mediator between us and God; to whom the Father hath delivered all things. As Christ says himself, opening, as it were, this Psalm, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.—In this way we shall obtain whatever we wish, and our minds will not be left in doubt as the minds of all Turks and Jews must necessarily be, when they call upon him whom

they know not. We, however, know that Christ is declared to be the Son of God with power, when all power over the nations is given unto him. And, therefore, when we pray in his name we obtain that which we desire.—These few things have I said at the opening of this passage, to confirm that fundamental article of our faith. Now I will come to the words themselves.

This King is appointed to set upon the throne of David his Father in Zion. There in the midst of the people of David he begins his kingdom: not however with the sword, like David, but with the Word only: for he is a preacher, or, one that ‘declares.’ But that kingdom which was begun in Zion, and among the people of David, did not end there, but the boundaries of this kingdom are extended throughout all nations, even unto the ends of the earth. That is, the kingdom which first began in Jerusalem, and the Word which was first preached in Zion, is spread abroad throughout all the world, as we have it, Psalm xix. 3, 4, “There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.”

Therefore, we must join with this versø him that went before, that you may not fall into that madness, or be left to that impious imagination, to think, that, because Christ is preached as the Lord and King of the whole earth, all kingdoms and empires are therefore either unlawful governments, or robberies: for these are the mad thoughts and conclusions of some.—The preceding versø shews that this King is a teacher: therefore, he will not destroy all those political governments, he will not change all those laws, nor overturn those kingdoms. These shall remain still the same in the world as they were before: that is, those kings and princes that do their duties shall be happy: on the other hand, they that neglect those duties shall suffer punishment.

This King shall not abolish this course and order of the world, nor alter it: for his kingdom is not of this world: but he brings to all kingdoms and to all states a new word and a new doctrine concerning himself;—

that all who believe in him and are baptized shall have the remission of their sins and eternal life. This is the kingdom of this King, and this is his dominion: they, therefore, that will not believe in him, and will not embrace him, shall be punished with eternal death, and shall never be able to deliver themselves from their sins, nor to escape the punishment of sin.

But this kingdom of our King, and this doctrine of his, is the occasion of those tumults of which the Psalm spoke in the beginning, for 'the heathen rage, the people imagine vain things, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together;' and all for the very purpose of abolishing this King and his doctrine, wherever it begins to appear. And for the accomplishment of this, the nations and people are furnished not only with wisdom, but also with free-will, by which they confirm themselves in the pursuit of honest life before men, and a life externally holy. These are natural gifts of man, and are in some measure placed within the limits of their own natural powers: if it were not so, what would be the benefit of human discipline and human laws? And, when some permit their lusts to be curbed by the reins of human laws, and others, like mad dogs, burst through all restraints, and give loose to their appetites, who does not see, that these things are in a measure a work of human reason, and which reason can perform of herself without the special work of the Holy Spirit.

It is on these gifts, therefore,—the light of reason and the liberty of the will,—that the gentiles pride themselves; and therefore they always want to have this King suppressed, who condemns and casts away both the light of reason and the liberty of the will, as being wholly useless and unavailable to the attainment of the remission of sins and eternal life. For this King teaches us, that the remission of sins and eternal life are by his death and merits only, and he tells us that this power is given unto him of the Father. And he will have the light of reason and the liberty of the will used only to govern the affairs of this world, and to the attainment of an honest



life before men only. And it is this only that human reason and human will can do. But the nations are not content with this: they wish to be saved eternally by the work and efforts of these gifts of nature. And when Christ condemns this, then they raise tumults, and condemn both the Teacher, or King, and his doctrine also.

You will say, perhaps, How, then, is Christ the King of the nations, if the nations will not have him, but condemn him, and raise tumults against him?—I answer: If the gentiles in rejecting Christ did it to their profit, then, indeed, some disadvantage might arise to our King; but when the gentiles reject Christ, they do it to their utter peril and most certain destruction. Therefore, the kingdom of Christ is not hurt, but the unbelieving world hurts itself and procures its own damnation.

The truth, therefore, still remains firm,—that the Lord has delivered up to Christ the King, the dominion over all nations; and therefore he, by his Gospel, calls all nations unto the faith. And they that hear and obey the Gospel, receive the remission of sins and eternal life: but they that believe and obey it not, remain still in their sins, and shall never be able to deliver themselves from their sins by any power of free-will or any light of reason. Therefore, such hurt not Christ or his kingdom, when they oppose him, but only destroy themselves.

This verse, therefore, is designed to shew, not only that the law of Moses is abrogated, and that a new kingdom is set up of Christ, and extended even over the gentiles; but also, to destroy and abolish all things that can possibly be performed by human reason and human will, because they can avail nothing unto salvation and eternal life. Therefore, neither human discipline, nor all those things that can possibly be performed by human virtues or human will, nor all the works that can be undertaken, how great soever they may be, can merit the remission of sins, or reconcile the soul to God,—nothing can do that but faith in the Son of God!

But, as we have seen before, this doctrine is the cause of disturbances and tumults in the world. For

why are we condemned at this day, but because we affirm that this King alone is our righteousness? and because we affirm, that remission of sins and eternal life are obtained alone by faith in him? But all the fury of the world does not at all move us, for we know from this Psalm that the dominion over all nations is committed unto our King, that they may be his "possession:" that is, that by him they may be saved, and attain the remission of sins and the Holy Ghost. But they that will not acknowledge him, to them there shall be another judgment hereafter.

Therefore, there is here given a most especial consolation to them that believe, that we have him for our Lord, who is the Lord of the whole world, and whom all kings and nations, and even Satan himself, must serve and obey, or be destroyed and perish. And though, if we look at the case itself, nothing of this kind appears; yet, events have ever shewn that the Holy Ghost speaks the truth.

Observe, and see what sort of a kingdom the kingdom of Christ was in the days of the apostles. The apostles, who preached this King and shewed him to the world, were few in number, and they the most contemptible and the dregs of the commonalty. On the other hand, the synagogue was flourishing in dignity and power, which opposed itself to these new and poor teachers. And at length there was added to their side, all the power and majesty of the Roman Empires, that shed the blood of many thousand martyrs, in order to suppress this King; nor was there any appearance that Christ had then any kingdom among, or dominion over, the gentiles; the gentiles seemed to have all dominion, not over the apostles only, whom they killed, but over Christ himself also, whom they blasphemed. And who does not see that both the synagogue and the Roman Empire were delivered up to this King? For as they would not embrace him, they so utterly perished that there is scarce a vestige or shadow of all their mighty power remaining. Thus this verse utterly destroyed, in those instances, every thing that opposed itself to this

Christ. Nor do we at all doubt that all the enemies of Christ, who at this day oppose the Gospel, will perish in the same way ; for this word shall not be in vain—" I will give thee the heathen," &c.

And as the kings of the earth rise up, and the nations rage, but at last find that all their attempts are vain, and their destruction certain ; so, in our hearts, death, sin, and the law, may rage ; but, because the Spirit has here said, " I will give thee the nations for thy possession," these enemies may, indeed, rise up and make attempts, but they shall never be able to conquer. For all is given to our King, who is set on the holy hill of Zion : the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are his alone, for ever and ever ! Amen !

And I have observed before, that all these things are intended to set forth and declare, that Christ is the Son of God, and by nature God. For it is not in the power of a creature to give life, to abolish death, and to heal sin. As, therefore, Christ does all this, and does it by the will of the Father, and by his command and gift, it follows that he is God ; according to that scripture, " My glory will I not give to another." Rightly, therefore, does the Epistle to the Hebrews say, " To whom of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son ?" And we also, in like manner, may here rightly say, To which of the angels gave he at any time the nations for their possession, and the ends of the earth for an inheritance ?

Ver. 9.—*Thou shalt bruise them with a sceptre of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

The preceding verse taught us that this King was appointed by divine authority to destroy, to pluck up, and to condemn, all the religion, the wisdom, the power, and the righteousness, that were to be found in the whole world, among all nations. For unto this King alone is this glory reserved, that, in his name only, all should be justified and live, who are justified and who do live.

Let the Jews, therefore, have a thousand Moseses;

if one be not enough for them ; let the nations have their teachers of what is right and just : let the monks and self-justifiers have their certain religious marks ; but, if they have not this King, if they be not gifted and adorned with his righteousness, they are still, and shall ever remain, in the kingdom of Satan, and in sin and death.

And this is the reason, as the Holy Ghost sets forth in the beginning of this Psalm, why the world sets itself against this King, and will endure these his bands. The world will not, as we experience to this day, bear to hear all its wisdom condemned, all its righteousness declared to be so much sin, and all its power despised as nothing but weakness. In a word, it will not endure the declaration, that all its excellencies together are nothing. For if that poor possession of gold and silver puffs men up and makes them so proud, how much more shall religion, righteousness, and the knowledge of the law, which was given from above, puff up and inflate their minds ?

When, therefore, the world sees these their greatest gifts to be reprobated by the Gospel, and nothing commended as being of any worth but this King, they are not only offended, but even take up arms, and defend these their gifts with all their might, and protect them from these insults. This is the cause of the most violent contests ; and yet, the event of the whole is just that of which the Psalmist prophesies, Psalm cxviii. 22, “ The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner.”

Here David compares this King to a stone which the builders refuse, that is, cast away, as nothing worth. And therefore, as they consider that this stone is to be refused, they immediately set about adorning themselves, their righteousness, and their works, with the title and honour of being acceptable unto God, and that they themselves are the church and people. And this rejection and contradiction there must be wherever this stone and these builders are : that is, wherever they

are who glory that they are the church and in the possession of the true doctrine, and who arrogate to themselves the worship of the true saints.

And what shall be the end of all these contests? Why that of which the Psalmist prophesied, that the stone which the builders rejected shall become the head of the corner: and that whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder: for thus does Christ explain this Psalm, Matt. xxi.

“Thou shalt bruise them with the sceptre (or rod) of iron,” says David. That is, the world shall be raised up against thee, and will not bear this judgment passed upon them; they will immediately prepare force and arms. But with what success! namely, this,—that at last they shall be broken in pieces and shall perish: for thou hast a sceptre, or rod of iron and adamant, against which they shall not be able to stand.—Or, if the Latin translation shall please some better, *THEOREM*, ‘Thou shalt rule them;’ or, as Hieronymus renders it, ‘Thou shalt feed them:’ for this figure is by no means unacceptable or unappropriate: we often speak thus in German, and say, ‘Thou shalt feed them thus and thus:’ that is, Thou shalt give them that food whereby they shall perish.

This verse, therefore, is a verse of threatening, and it is designed to terrify the wicked who set themselves against this King. On the other hand, to us it is consolatory, who join ourselves unto this King, and know, that his kingdom is, with respect to its being in this world, weak, labouring under many infirmities, opposed by tyrants and the great ones of this world, by false brethren, and by authors of sects and heresies, and by our own conscience also. But its infirmity is not so great, nor the power of our adversaries so great, but that our King will at length arise, when all who oppose him shall fall and utterly perish.

But perhaps you will say, Why does the Holy Spirit designate the Gospel by the term “sceptre (or rod) of iron,” when in reality it is a word that refreshes and saves

the soul? And Christ, also, came not to destroy the world, but that the world through him might be saved. But here the Holy Spirit seems to prophesy the contrary, and to say, that he should destroy the world.

I answer: It is true that the office of Christ is to save the world, to deliver it from sin, and to give it eternal life. And thus the Gospel also is rightly called by Paul, "the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth." For they that truly embrace Christ and believe his Word, shall certainly obtain salvation. And therefore, the scripture also calls Christ the cornerstone which sustains the weight of the whole building, and is that on which the whole edifice rests. But they that embrace not Christ, but hate his Word, as they reject their salvation, how shall they not perish? They that will not lean upon this stone, but run against it with daring foreheads, how shall they not be crushed?

And hence, Christ says, John xii. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." The Word of the Gospel is indeed a sceptre, or rod of salvation, unto all that believe, but they that reject it cannot escape perdition: and that, not from the fault of the Word, which is holy and offereth life, but from the man's own fault, who rejects that salvation which is offered, and depends rather, like the Jews of old, on laws and sacrifices; like the monks, who depend upon their vows and their traditions; and the self-justiciaries, who depend on their modes of worship which they form out to themselves. For why do they not humble themselves? Why do they not give honour unto God? Why do they not confess that they are miserable sinners and embrace Christ? For if they would do this, then would the Gospel be to them the sceptre and rod of salvation!

Thou oughtest to mark diligently this description,—that the Gospel is called a "sceptre of iron," and they that oppose themselves to it a potsherd, or "potter's vessel." And, indeed, it is not a matter of much trouble, when

you hold a mallet of iron in your hand, to break an earthen pot with it. Indeed, what need is there of any strength at all, or even the weight of your arms? for if the iron should fall into the vessel, even accidentally, it would break it in pieces.

This description, therefore, is designed to set forth that invincible power of the Word, which is not perceived by the eyes, but is hidden. For if you follow the judgment of reason, or of the world, what is more weak than the Word? What more contemptible? It seems not to be iron, but mere straw and stubble, which, by the least breath of wind, is moved from its place and cannot stand a moment. And just in this way do kings, the Pope, the bishops, and all the multitude of the wicked, think of us; they look upon us as few in number, and as poor miserable beggars, who have no certain place of rest even among our own friends. And therefore, they securely contemn both us and the Word which we preach: they fear no kind of ruin or calamity from us: for they are many in number and have power, dignity, and wealth, on their side. And hence, they laugh at our ridiculous folly, when we threateningly declare, that certain punishment will fall upon such open despisers of the Word.

And thus also Paul and Peter and the rest of the apostles, what were they when compared to the synagogue, whose doctrine, whose worship, and the whole of whose priesthood they endeavoured to change? Indeed, the high-priests laughed at all these attempts. But mark thou what followed. Did not this weak voice of Peter and Paul and the others prove to be, in truth, an iron voice and a mallet, by which the whole synagogue, like a potsherd, was broken in pieces and reduced to dust? yea, so that not even one sherd remained (as Isaiah, using this same figure, has observed,) to take fire from the hearth. For that miserable people are not only scattered throughout the whole world like sherds, but there is not one part of them left that is useful for any one thing. In a word, they are reprobated, and are profitable neither for the state nor the church.

And the same thing shall happen also to those who, at this day, oppose themselves to the Word; that is, the Pope and all his accomplices, the Turks, and all sectarians who disturb the church. All these the Holy Spirit here points out, and says, that they are a sherd, which is not of use even so much as to take fire from the hearth with. But it does not outwardly appear that such is the power of the Word; nay, it appears to be quite the contrary. Our doctrine seems every moment liable to fall, being surrounded with such a multitude of adversaries, wicked teachers, and idolatries, which seem likely to prevail against us.

This verse, therefore, is designed to comfort us, that we may not cast down our minds nor despair: but be fully assured, that, as all the enemies of the Word are already judged and cast down into hell before God, so, this judgment shall be made manifest in its time. For the Word of God, like a torrent, cannot be stopped by any force; but, as its nature is, it will save them that believe, but will crush and damn all the wicked. Because the Author of this Word is of divine wisdom, power, and justice; and therefore, he is above all things that we have or are. For what is the Pope with all his justiciaries? What is the Turk with all his power? What are all our sectarians with all their plausible and artful preambles? They are all nothing: they are like the futile and useless bulls of the Pope; which are inflated, and seem to be something, but by and by vanish, and prove to be nothing at all.

The Holy Ghost, therefore, when he uses this figure, does not call them a potter's vessel because they can be broken easily and without any trouble at all; but because these vessels, when broken, are of no utility or service whatever. Wooden vessels might be of some use to burn: and if you break vessels of iron, or gold, or silver, the pieces may be of some service: but the pieces of a potter's vessel are of no service whatever. And it is thus that all the enemies of the Word shall be broken and cast away.



Ver. 10.—*Be instructed now therefore, ye kings; be corrected, ye that are judges of the earth.*

Hitherto the prophet, being full of the Holy Ghost, has set forth to us and described this King and his kingdom. He now adds an exhortatory conclusion, the like of which you will not find in all the books that are written! For ail other writers commend unto us governments and magistrates, and exhort their subjects to obedience; and they do well in so doing. But our prophet does the contrary. He does not speak to peasants, to the commonalty, to slaves, nor to children, and command them to be obedient; but he speaks to kings themselves, and commands them to suffer themselves to be instructed and disciplined!

What hast thou ever heard before like unto this? That those should be called unto discipline who command over others? Is it not, then, pride and presumption thus to address kings in general, without one exception, and to speak to them all as fools, as understanding nothing, and as living without any laws or discipline? For if they were wise and instructed before, why does he say, be instructed and understand? And if they are ruled by laws, why does he say, be disciplined or corrected?—The reason is because this King, as the prophet had said in the beginning, does not reign without the cross and various vexations of various enemies. For as he calls all other kings, without any exception, to discipline; as he condemns all their laws, righteousness, and wisdom, and calls the kings themselves and the judges of the earth fools, and says, that they have need of a teacher who may teach them righteousness and discipline; therefore, they rise up against him, they will not be taught nor accounted fools.

But you will say, perhaps, Are then all governments bad and their laws to be condemned? By no means! Governments and laws were ordained by God himself. But do thou consider who this King is. He is not a worldly king, but a Teacher, who teaches concerning the remission of sins, and the way to attain unto eternal life.

And if thou bring in laws and governments here, as being available unto the attainment of eternal salvation, thou art deceived. This King, therefore, does not condemn the wisdom and righteousness of kings, if those virtues be kept in their place: that is, if these kings rule and govern by their wisdom, those things that are subjected to their reason; and if, by their lives and manners, they invite others to obedience, and devote themselves to the public good and tranquillity. For here, industry and virtue will have their rewards: for God will give them success. But when, from a confidence in these gifts, these kings despise the Word, reject the Mediator Christ, and yet hope for salvation,— here is their sin: because this King reigns over even the most high, the most powerful, the most wise, and the most righteous, of the earth; and commands them to come unto him, that they may learn from him and hear him, &c.

By this King and his kingdom, therefore, not only Moses and his law are done away with, but also all governments, together with all their gifts of wisdom, power, laws, discipline, virtues, religions, and devotedness; because, all these things avail nothing unto salvation; which is placed in this alone,— that thou hear this Teacher, and give thyself up to him to be ruled, disciplined, formed, and fashioned. For this King, is the “all in all.” Nothing can please God, nothing can be acceptable to God but this King!

All those, therefore, who embrace not this King, who cast themselves not at his feet, and who use him not as a Mediator,—all those God hates, rejects, and damns for ever! He pays no regard to their works, nor their virtues, nor their devotedness, nor their righteousness and holiness before men, by which they attempt to recommend themselves to him. This Son is the only one in whom he is “well-pleased;” he only possesses all things, and holds all things by the will of the Father.

In this manner, therefore, must all kings fall down in obedience at the feet of this King, if they would obtain salvation: they must stop their own mouths and

obey the voice of the Gospel. But the greater part do just the contrary: for our King is set as a sign that shall be spoken against. But what advantage do they get who thus contradict? only this,—to be condemned and rejected of God. For it is a fixed certainty, that not only all kings and rulers, but even the gates of hell and all angels, must yield to this King. He alone must fill heaven and earth, and all things, as Paul saith, and that, for our consolation, that we may cleave with a steady faith unto him, and hope for salvation through him alone. This is true divinity; and this is the divinity that teaches and lifts up our minds under the greatest perils.

Nor is this particle of time “now” altogether without its peculiar force: for it signifies the time of the gospel spread abroad by the apostles. And here, if you look at the external appearance, there not only appears to be the greatest infirmity, but also a manifest peril in the matter. For here a very few poor creatures in number, and they out of the contemptible commonalty and the dregs of the people, spread abroad a new kind of doctrine in the world, and teach salvation alone though Christ crucified; and they so do it, that they condemn all other things as unavailable unto salvation.

Therefore this particle “now” must be urged with force, and also together with it “be instructed” or ‘wise,’ and “be corrected;” for the Holy Spirit means to say, that, although kings and judges, &c. have the knowledge of laws, and are devoted to the pursuit of virtue, yet, unless they hear this Teacher and suffer themselves to be taught, they are madmen and fools: for if the knowledge of Christ be wanting, all their wisdom is foolishness, and all their righteousness iniquity and sin; nay, that their life itself is a state of death.

In this verse, therefore, the Holy Spirit comprehends and includes the whole world, and puts all in subjection unto Christ; and he addresses the kings of the world as if they were grasshoppers, and the wise men of the world as if they were children. For he sees what must evidently follow,—that, unless they obey this

Teacher, they must be consigned to eternal flames, together with all their power, wisdom, righteousness, and every thing else in which they boast. For this is the command of God, that all should humble themselves, and shut their mouths, as we have it written, Isaiah liii. : that they might know that this King alone is he by whom salvation and life come. They that obey this commandment shall be saved, and they that obey not shall perish.

Ver. 11.—*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*

Hitherto the prophet has taught us, that this King Christ is set on Zion: and he has described him, shewing who, and how great, he is,—that he is the Son of God, begotten from all eternity, and the true God, and yet, born a man corporally, that he might receive the throne of his father David, and rule in Zion. And then the prophet shews, that his kingdom was to be diffused from thence unto the utmost confines of the earth. For all nations are given unto this King, that he might be King of kings and Lord of lords: to whom the eyes, and ears, and hearts of all men might be turned, whether they be Jews or gentiles, or righteous or sinners, spiritual magistrates or civil. For in this one King all things are placed: he alone has and gives life, he alone justifies, he alone saves.

To this doctrine, which forms the principal part of this Psalm, the prophet has subjoined an exhortation, in which he mentions by name the same characters which he had mentioned at the beginning of the Psalm; that is, all kings and judges; who cause a tumult when this King exercises his office, and admonishes them to cease from their rage and tumult, and humble themselves before him, become his disciples, and suffer themselves to be judged and condemned as sinners and reprobate, and hear him as the Son.—And to this same exhortation also the present verse pertains. For it not only commands them to hear this King, but also, after they have heard him, to cease from all their rage and from

rising up against him, and to serve him. And it gives the reason,—because this King is the Lord, or the true God. For we have here the *tetragrammaton* (as they term it) **JEHOVAH**, which, in the scriptures, is given to God alone.

The Jews indeed will by no means allow, that the person which the prophet had before called King, is here called **JEHOVAH**: but all their attempts to prove their point are vain: because the prophet immediately adds “kiss the Son.” But as the expression ‘to kiss’ is expressive of worship: the Father thereby shews, that it is his will that all should serve and adore the Son: and the prophet shews, that when we serve and obey him, we serve and obey God: and that if we wish to serve God, the only way to do it is in the Son.

And in this same way does Hosea join together the worship of God and of this King, chap. iii. 5, “Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king.” For as the Father and the Son are one, the Father cannot be worshipped without the Son. And the Father himself commands, that they who would serve him should serve and hear his Son. But they that deny the Son, like the Jews and Turks, deny God himself, and are abominable idolaters.

Let us cast away from us, therefore, the dreams of the Jews, and let us be assured that the Person of the Son, who is the Son of David, and who sits on the throne of David, is God, and that it is he who in this passage to whom is given the all sacred name **JEHOVAH**.—This is the first thing that I thought proper to observe upon this verse.

The other thing is, that we observe carefully the proper signification of the words themselves herein contained: for we know how these words have been corrupted in the church of the Pope. By these words the true worship of God is described. But all those corruptions in the popish church have arisen, because no one would look diligently into the original text: or rather, it was because God, on account of our ingratitude, has

chastened us with so severe a rod of blindness, that we could not see those things that were plainly set before our eyes. Only consult and examine the books of all our recent theologians, and you will see that, according to them, to serve God is nothing more than to flee into a desert, to run away from all political, civil, and social duties, and to hide oneself in a monastery.

But if this be a true definition, what is the use of all those precepts, with which the writing of the apostles abound, concerning the loving of our wives, the obedience of servants, the justice and kindness of masters, and diligence and faithfulness in administering the offices of the state. Do not these precepts shew that the Gospel commends all those different situations and duties of life. What madness was it then in these men to teach, that to serve God, is, to turn away from all these situations and duties of life, and to change, not only our dress, but also our nature and our sex? And what else does the monk do but this, when he wishes, contrary to the ordinance of God, that he was something else and not a male? Is not this the extreme of madness?

I remember there being once at Erfurt two eminent lawyers sick and at the point of death. These men, in the midst of their dying sighs and groans, exclaimed, 'Oh, if we had but been monks and not lawyers, how much more happily should we now have died!' But what was passed could not be recalled or altered: and therefore, they adopted the only remedy which seemed now to be left them: and that was, (in addition to all the holy ceremonies which they procured to be performed over them at an immense price,) to have their corpses wrapped up in a monk's cloak and cowl, and thus to be buried.—Is not this a sufficiently clear proof that these men were totally ignorant that they might have served God in the station of life in which they were placed as well as in a desert among monks.

We must, therefore, come to a clear definition and understanding of this service of God, and know what it is. We are to be assured, that serving God is not changing our habit, or changing our sex, or running

away from all civil and social duties, or hiding ourselves in a monastery. All these things are external, and may be feigned, and the whole is an abomination; because it is all undertaken without the authority of the Word, from our own choosing or devotion (as it is called.) Take heed, therefore, that thou adorn nothing of this kind with the all holy appellation of 'the worship or service of God.'

But why do I dwell upon such human traditions? Let not even the Jews adorn their sacrifices and other legal forms of worship with the appellation of the service and worship of God: even though those forms were commanded from heaven by God himself. For if this Psalm had said, 'Come to Jerusalem, sacrifice, cleanse your garments, fast, adore the cherubim,' &c. then indeed we should have been obliged to infer that such was the proper and true service of God; but the Psalm says nothing about all this: it speaks of a new kingdom and a new doctrine, that should come after that of Moses.

Therefore, remove at once from thine eyes all religions and worships, yea, even those which God himself instituted by Moses: for this new King is come, and now a new kind of service is made known. And what this worship is may be shewn from the Decalogue itself, which says, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'

These two things I, in my way, always distinguish thus,—that, to "worship," or 'adore,' is the act of a man turning towards God; but that, to "serve," is the act of a man sent out from God. Or, as Christ is wont to speak in his parable, to "adore" is the act of one entering in to God, and, to "serve," the act of one coming out from God. For he that worships or adores falls on his knees, and shews signs of subjection and submission; and this is, as it were, a *passive* service; for the man that thus turns himself to God with a sure confidence in his mercy through Christ, receives the remission of sins, and is justified; and being in this way received into grace, he comes out from God and turns

towards men, and does the will of God, which respects duties towards men. Paul being now justified by faith does just things : that is, he exercises his duty in teaching ; and the magistrate does it in ruling, and the father of the family in labouring ; and thus they serve God. For they do not that which pleases them, like the monks, but what God commands.

Therefore to serve God is nothing more or less than to do what God commands, and to acknowledge that obedience to be due to him. This all those monks, and those teachers of the Pope, knew not : if they had they would not have ordered men to enter into monasteries, and run away from all their civil and social duties. It was enough for them to remain in the station in which God had placed them, and to look to his law, and do what that commanded, and not to frame out new works and services of their own, abhorrent from all the common customs of life, like all those rules and manners of the Pope and his monks.—Thus have I given a general outline of what serving God is.

But farther, although the Jews deny that Christ is in this passage called Lord, yet, as the whole Psalm speaks of a new King set upon Zion, to whom the nations and the ends of the earth are given, and all kings are commanded to serve him. And therefore, we must here see also what it is to serve Christ. But let us not depart from our general definition of the service of God : for to serve Christ the King is nothing else than first to hear this King, and afterwards to do all things in his name which our situation and calling in life require.—So that the meaning of the whole is, Do ye kings and judges of the earth, and whoever are great, either in the church or in the world, leave every thing else that there is in the whole world, even Moses himself, and his laws and ceremonies, and hear this King, become his disciples, and kiss him ;—this is the first part of your service. And then that which you hear, do, and do it in the name of this same King : as Paul saith, Col. iii. 17, “ Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto



God and the Father by him.—Here therefore you have what it is to serve this King.

But the prophet himself defines this service when he commands us to serve this King “with fear.” For this is designed to denote the persons to whom the Holy Ghost more especially speaks. Because kings are inflated with their power and wealth, and judges with their wisdom; and in general all of them are self-justiciaries, and have a great opinion of their own sanctity, and appear righteous in their own eyes. But as Psalm cxlvii. 11, “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy.” And why does he add, “them that fear him:” because those alone please him who fear him, who acknowledge themselves sinners, and therefore, do not loftily lift up their heads, but lower them down with humility.

And yet here we are to observe the middle way. For when in this way thou feelest fear and terror, thou art not to indulge in the troubled feelings of thy heart, nor art thou to conclude that God is angry with thee, or that he has cast thee off and will destroy thee; but thou art to raise thine eyes and look up to Christ, who has set himself as a Mediator between God and us, and has taken all our sins upon his own shoulders, and has suffered the punishment of death upon the cross for them. This sight, like that of the brazen serpent, will assuage thy fears, that they may not overwhelm thee and drive thee to desperation.

But it is a difficult matter to understand the contents of this verse, ‘to serve with fear, and rejoice with trembling:’ and Christians hardly arrive at it with the greatest labourings and sweatings. We hear the words, and they appear to be easy: but the mind does not receive and comprehend them, when put to the serious and spiritual conflict, so easily as it can receive and understand that which belongs to human wisdom and human affairs. Our whole life will not suffice to arrive at the mastership of this one point of experience: for our nature is most pronely and vehemently inclined to both extremes. When our mind is lifted up with pros-

perity, there is no bound to our pride, as we see in all the rich of the world. And, on the other hand, when adversity comes, there is no animal more overwhelmed with fear than man; for there is no end to his complaining, and away he falls at once into despair. This is our nature: we are depraved in both respects: whether we are filled with prosperity or visited with adversity, the extreme is the same in both.

We have need here, therefore, to use every effort in order to govern and moderate these depraved propensities. We must betake ourselves unto this King, who is the only physician that can heal these inveterate diseases. And he himself gives us the remedy, when he says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."

There is a remarkable complaint of Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, vii. 22, 23, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin in my members." That is, the whole of our nature wars against the law of God. This is, indeed, a horrid thing to say: but the Apostle confirms it when he says, that the law in his members brings him into captivity: that is, 'whether I will or not I am forced to serve the law of sin in my members, against the law of God.' And so we see that in young men the motions of lust drive them into sin whether they will or no: nor has reason or free-will strength enough to stand against, or to repress, these furious and violent motions. And avarice has just the same effect upon old men.

And as these depravities affect and vex each certain age of men, so are all Christians exercised and vexed with despair in adversity, and security and presumption in prosperity. Such are we all by nature: our sins so lead us captive that we cannot 'rejoice in the midst of fears, nor fear in the midst of rejoicing.' So difficult is it rightly to mingle these things, and to let them counterbalance each other, as the Holy Spirit commands us in the admonition contained in the verse before us. For, to fear and to rejoice, are feelings contrary to each other:

and yet, if we would be Christians, we must attend unto, and attain unto, both these things,—we must fear, and tremble, and rejoice, at the same time.

OUR MORE recent divines have disputed much about *servile* and *filial* fear. But it is an easy thing to distinguish between a father chastising his son, and the public magistrate punishing a malefactor. When a father chastens his son he does not beat out and destroy all the hope and affection that the son has in his heart towards his parent: for he can see the end of the rod: that is, he can see that his father's anger will cease with the rod. Therefore, although he grieves, although he fears the anger of his father, yet he still retains a hope of mercy. But the thief or malefactor has not such a state of mind under his punishment when he is taken to execution by the public magistrate. He knows that the executioner's mind is such, that he cannot be merciful, nor cease from the discharge of his duty till the thief is hanged. And therefore, he despairs, because there is no hope of pardon left him, and he cannot see the end of the punishment.

This example, drawn from common life, is most plain: but when we are under our punishment, it is a very difficult thing to lay hold of the persuasion that God is our Father. And therefore, we fear not with a filial fear, because we cannot see the design of God's instructing of us; and we consequently fear him with a servile fear, because we conclude that he will be angry with us for ever.

He, therefore, that can be rightly wise here, and when he feels the punishment of his sins, can say to himself, 'Thou art a son of God; and God as a Father chastens the son whom he loveth: his anger is but for a moment: the Lord will not be angry for ever:—this man will be able to do that which the Holy Spirit commands in this place.

David knew this part of experience well, as his writings testify: which shew, that in his conflicts he did not cast away his hope, for he still held fast prayer. And although his rejoicing was at a very low ebb, yet he still

saw the end of the rod, and overcame all his fears, that he might not, like the ungodly, be wholly swallowed up in despair. But if you look at the flesh and its feelings, that was almost swallowed with fear, so that it could not feel the rejoicing. And yet, as Paul saith, with his mind he served the law of God, even under the very fears of punishment. He still called upon God, and did not, like the malefactor before the public officer, feel that there was no hope of pardon; he did not despair thus even when he was enduring the punishment. He was assured that God was his Father, and that he would not be angry for ever.

It is easy, therefore, to decide, that the true filial fear of God is that which is mingled with rejoicing or hope: but, if you follow sense, you will find that rejoicing is almost overwhelmed and swallowed up. But thou art not therefore to suffer thy mind to be cast down, nor to despair: bear with the Lord, and lay hold of the Word, which declares that 'the anger of God is but for a moment,' and that 'in his favour (or good-will) is life;' that is, that God desires that we should live and not perish; and that he sends all these punishments upon us for that very end. In this way thou wilt conceive some little feeling of joy, if it be but a drop; and that will increase by degrees, until thou at length shall overcome all fear. To arrive, however, at the practical part of these things is a very difficult thing; and yet it is that at which the saints of God have arrived, as the examples afforded by their lives fully justify. We, therefore, must follow their footsteps, and arrive at this point of experience: and if we pray earnestly for it, the Holy Spirit will help us.

You will find many young men who fear God, and who do not rush into lusts like the drudges of Satan. And yet if you were to look into the hearts of these you would find that they were so agitated with the raging motions of lust, that they themselves do not taste scarcely a drop of chastity, which, nevertheless, they wish with all their hearts to be granted unto them. In a word, they themselves consider their hearts to be mere brothels, and feel

them to be such ; in which, according to their feelings, there is no trace of chastity whatever. And yet, there is chastity lying hid at the bottom of their hearts, but it is all smothered by the motions of lust which they feel, until the time of marrying arrives. But although they cannot divest themselves of the feelings of the flesh, yet their hearts groan after chastity ; they long for that which they feel is not in their power ; and they endure all these flames of lust against their wills. As, therefore, chastity in these seems to be hidden in a corner, and almost wholly extinguished ; so also, the rejoicing of which we have been speaking is not felt, because fear pervades all the soul, and yet fear does not wholly overcome it. And in the same manner also other passions prevail as it regards the feelings, but spiritual strength and hope at length prevail : because the power of spiritual strength is greater than that of fear, lust, or any other passions.

This is the way in which these things are to be learned and borne, because they will never be otherwise. The power of God is to be made perfect in our weakness. Paul would willingly have had a pure and uninterrupted fear, a pure rejoicing, and a pure chastity : that is, a pure feeling of those things of which he was in the possession, and which he desired ever to be uppermost. But if these things should take place in this life, there would be nothing more of a life of tribulation ; it would be a fruitful paradise. Both the young man and the old, if they had no more feeling of sin, if they were no farther exercised with despair, would be in the kingdom of heaven. But this life ought not to be such ; nay, it cannot be such. Uninterrupted rejoicing ought not to be felt ; fear ought to be mingled with it. For as long as this flesh lives, it does as flesh will always do : these things will never be mended perfectly. Therefore, let us not despair, for the spirit is hidden : yet God sees the spirit and knoweth it, and because it apprehendeth Christ by faith, he forgiveth the man all his sins.—This is one part of the worship, where we are commanded ‘ to serve Christ with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling.’

And there is a great reason why the Holy Ghost joins rejoicing with trembling; for if pure rejoicing were felt without fear, security would follow, and presumption would follow upon security, and damnation upon presumption: for presumption God cannot endure. And we shall then rightly mingle these things if we rejoice in God, and remain confounded in ourselves: for we are not only foolish but miserable sinners: and therefore, there is sufficient cause why we should tremble and fear for ourselves.

But we are not to stop here. For if thou never see any thing but that thou art a sinner, despair will follow. Therefore, we must raise our eyes and look at Christ, and then rejoicing will follow upon our fear. For we shall say thus with ourselves, I am indeed a sinner, but I will not therefore despair, for Christ is righteous. Yea, Christ has taken all my sins upon himself, and has died and risen again that I might clothe myself with his righteousness. And, if I have no wisdom myself, he is made of God wisdom unto me. If I am poor and needy, he is powerful and rich.

This then is that pure worship, with which Christ will be worshipped by us, kept wholly separate from all superstitions: for the Holy Ghost pays no regard to these, nor to any of the other inventions of human wisdom. Let us, therefore, worship God thus, and keep this worship distinct from all external things. For God regards not whether thou be a master or a servant, a husband or an unmarried man, a male or a female, a teacher or a disciple. These are all human conditions, or creatures, of which the Lord has permitted us to be the lords and rulers. He regards not whether thou fast or feast. All these things, saith he, are nothing to me and my worship. My worship is to reverence me, to receive all things of me, to acknowledge me, to speak of me, to proclaim and declare that all things are mine which are found throughout the whole world, and to confess that ye are without me, sinners, fools, and helpless: and also to acknowledge that I am not a tyrant; that I do not humble you because I desire your destruction,

but that I may recall you from pride and teach you to be humble.

And, says God, as I have wrought all this by the cross, my will is, that ye should lift up yourselves again, and raise your heads and your eyes unto my Christ. For if ye feel the want of wisdom, or righteousness, or strength, you will find in him a fountain of all wisdom and righteousness: and thus ye will serve me with fear and rejoice with trembling. There is, indeed, a great portion of fear in our feelings, and a very small degree of rejoicing; and yet the latter through spiritual might at length prevails and triumphs.

When I was young I used to hate this verse, for I did not much like to hear that God was to be feared. And all this was because I did not know that joy was to be mingled with rejoicing or hope: that is, I did not know the difference between our works and the works of Christ. All our works are evil, because our whole nature is evil: therefore, we ought not to be secure but to fear the judgment of God. On the other hand, the works of Christ are holy and perfect: therefore we ought to hold fast the hope of mercy: because Christ was not born and made under the law, and crucified for himself, but he wished all these to be free gifts for us and for our sakes.

Therefore, let us so fear, that rejoicing may not be wholly excluded; for our rejoicing ought to be a true rejoicing: because it is not so concealed in the heart, but that signs of it appear outwardly. A peaceful mind, and one that is assured that God for Christ's sake is reconciled unto us, produces a joyful countenance and gladdened eyes, and lets loose the tongue to proclaim the praises of God.

In this manner, says the Holy Ghost, shall ye serve this King: there shall be joy both without and within, and yet, joined with reverence: that ye may not become swine and filled with security, and sink down into carnal enjoyment. But if you keep away all security, God is not offended with joyfulness and gladness, nay, he is offended with sorrow and dejectedness, and even enjoins

cheerfulness and gladness. Thus, under the law, it was forbidden that the holy ceremonies should be performed by persons who were sorrowful or mourning. And Malachi saith, ‘that the sacrifices were polluted by mourning.’ Let us therefore rejoice: but yet so, that we become not secure, but that fear may be mingled with our joy, and hope with our fear.

This, therefore, is an exhortation that is against the proud, and in favour of the weak, who are too much cast down by their humiliation. For it is equally blasphemy either to despair or to presume. For God will not have us mount up to heaven nor sink under the earth, but keep in the royal mid-way. For our feet are naturally inclined to sink downwards, and our head to mount upwards. And yet, although we live upon the earth, we are commanded ‘to have our conversation in heaven.’—In a word, they that are real Christians, are neither wholly fearful nor wholly joyful. Their joy is mingled with fear, their hope with trembling, their laughing with tears; but they are fully persuaded that they shall fully and uninterruptedly rejoice when they have laid down this flesh; which as it cannot cast away its fear, so it is useful to keep us in a proper degree, that we become not secure.

In this manner, then, has this Psalm defined and set forth the worship of God: and this is the true religion:—to fear God, and to trust in God. Where these two are rightly tempered, the whole life is righteous and holy. All external ceremonies, and all external works of every kind,—all these things are governed rightly when these two are rightly tempered.—And now the Holy Ghost adds the commination and the consolation: that he might thus rightly conclude the prophecy.

Ver. 12.—*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; for the wrath of God is kindled in a moment. But blessed are all they that trust in him.*

To the exhortation is here added a commination most severe: and it is more especially designed to strike at the pride of kings, and the wise, the holy, and all those who trust in the creature out of God. For our



nature is so depraved and corrupt, and so prone to presumption and security, when matters go on prosperously with us, that, if the Holy Spirit did not change our hearts, it would be impossible for us to stand. No laws, no punishments, can restrain this corrupt principle of nature. Nothing but a voice sounding from heaven in our conscience can keep off our pride, and temper joy and rejoicing with fear.

With respect to the grammatical particularities of this passage, all those who are acquainted with the Hebrew know that we are not to read here “apprehend” as the Latin text has it, but “kiss:” we will therefore leave the LXX. to themselves, but we will not be so taught the true meaning of the Hebrew.

And what the LXX. have rendered *δραξασθαι παιδειαν* is in the Hebrew, BAR: the signification of which word is very extensive. It is a noun adjective, and signifies ‘pure,’ ‘elect,’ ‘choice,’ &c. And therefore Hieronymus has rendered the passage, ‘Adore purely.’ But, by a figure of speech, which often turns a common into a proper noun, this word is frequently transferred to other things: and hence, wheat or corn on account of its intrinsic excellence, is often called BAR. And it is in this way that we understand many passages of the Apostle Paul, the prophet David, the philosopher Aristotle, &c. For on account of the excellence of a thing, as I have often said, a noun common is frequently made a noun proper. Thus Christ, because of his excellence, is often called the just, the wise, the Priest, the Son of Man, the King, &c.

In this same way also BAR signifies, substantively, a ‘son,’ as being a thing very precious, dear, and sweet to parents. If David, therefore, had wished to speak in plain Hebrew, he would have used the word BEN, but he uses the word BAR in the same signification, by a figurative expression, in order that he might hide this prophecy from the eyes of the devil and the wicked, who are not worthy to look into these things.—This is the true meaning and design of this expression, as far as I am enabled to understand it. In the 19th Psalm, we

have it put adjectively, "The commandment (or law) of the Lord is *pure*;" but the Latin translation has 'clear.'

But you will say, perhaps, what is the design and meaning of the expression "kiss?"— It signifies properly a ceremony. There are various kinds of kisses. The spouse saith in the Song, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." This is a kiss of love and most fervent affection. And therefore, Paul also saith, "Greet ye one another with a holy kiss."

There is another kiss on the hands also, and that, according to our customs, is doing homage; and this is what we use towards those whom we acknowledge as our superiors.—There is another kiss on the feet also, by which extreme humility is signified; this Christ used at his last supper, that he might make himself the least in the kingdom of heaven and the servant of all. For he was made our servant, and had us for his masters, when he laboured for our sakes and bore our sins.

Hieronymus, therefore, did not render the passage literally, but in substance, when he translated it thus, 'Adore purely.' But he erred in rendering the noun *BAR* adverbially. If he had rendered it as a noun he would have been right, 'Adore the pure, (or pure one) the elect, the precious.' Thus we also often say, 'my light,' 'my dear heart,' &c.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, here in the most beautifully figurative, and the plainest words, commends unto us the Son of God. "Kiss the Son," saith he: that is, submit yourselves to him, fall down before him, humble yourselves, acknowledge your subjection,—to whom? at whose feet? at the feet of the all-precious, the all-beloved, the all-pure One, in whom the Father is well-pleased; as he himself has testified from heaven, "This is my beloved Son." And Christ himself also says by John, "The Father loveth the Son." And they are these very expressions that this Psalm embraces, and of which it prophesies, when it calls the Son *BAR*. As if it were said, 'He is my beloved, my elect, my pure One, in whom my soul delighteth.—Therefore, adore him who

is the only delight of God, and in whom alone he is well-pleased, and ye will adore God, and will do that which is well-pleasing to God. Bend the knee, therefore, to him, and kiss his feet.'

Moreover, these words imply that Christ is not merely man, because the Father hath here given his honour unto the Son, and commands the Son to be adored. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, (says Moses) and him only shalt thou serve." And by Isaiah the Lord says, "My glory will I not give to another." As, therefore, God cannot be a liar, and yet here commands that we should serve the Son, it of necessity follows, that this King, who is set on the holy hill of Zion, is naturally God. And therefore, I have shewn before, that, although the Jews contend that the preceding verse is to be referred to God himself, yet, if they be not wholly mad, they must confess, that God here by his own command sends us all to the Son and wills that the Son should be adored and worshipped.

This verse, therefore, exactly agrees with those words of the Gospel, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." "He that believeth in me shall never die." "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." "My doctrine is not mine." "The things that I speak, the Father speaketh also." "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." "The Father hath given all things unto me." "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." "The Son judgeth no one." "As the Father quickeneth, so the Son quickeneth whom he will," &c.

In all these scriptures, the Father refers all things to the Son; and again, the Son all things unto the Father: so that we are not left to doubt that this King is truly, legitimately, and naturally God: and that, unless you worship and embrace this King, God cannot be worshipped; for the Father and the Son are one.

In vain, therefore, are all the speculative views of the Turk and the Pope concerning God out of Christ. The Turk says, that he adores the God who made heaven and earth: and the Jew says the same. But as both these deny that this King is the Son of God, they not

only both wander from God, but both adore an idol which they themselves have set up in their own heart. For they have formed out to their imagination just such a God as they themselves thought best, and not such an one as God has revealed himself to be. But God abhors all such, and shuts his ears to their prayers: for he will hear and see no one but in his Son. As Christ says to Philip, John xiv. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." For when Philip prayed, "Shew us the Father:" Christ, as one wondering, said, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me, Philip." As if he had said, Where are all your thoughts and speculations leading you to? Unless you fix your eyes and your mind on me you will never find either God or the Father. "For I am in the Father and the Father in me: and the words which I speak I speak not of myself, but the Father which dwelleth in me he doeth the works."

In this manner does the Father commit all the government of the whole creation to the hand and bosom of the Son. And this indeed was done from all eternity, but was afterward made known by revelation and declaration: for the Son had this glory from all eternity, but was then first made manifest when the Gospel was promulgated throughout the whole world.

In the next place, this verse shews the abrogation of the law and all legal ceremonies of worship. For the Psalmist does not speak of the worship and adoration which were in the temple of Jerusalem, but he speaks of another worship. If, says he, ye would adore and worship God, if ye would offer unto him an acceptable sacrifice, and so serve God that the service shall be well-pleasing unto him: do nothing else but "Kiss the Son." Serve God in this way only, and God will be propitious to you.

But no one can be persuaded of this. And therefore, the Arian rises up and scatters abroad his blasphemous doctrine against the Son of God. The Turk holds it as the most awful wickedness in us, because we believe that Christ is the Son of God, and adore him as such. The

Pope, although he steers clear of these open blasphemies, yet, does not in reality acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, because he is not contented with the sacrifice that he has made of himself, but teaches us that we can effect that by our own works which the Son of God effected by his blood-shedding and death.

Let us, therefore, bear in mind the testimony here given us, that this King is the Son of God, begotten of the Father, from all eternity ; and now set before us that we might kiss him and serve him : that is, that we might be assured, that we are by him reconciled unto God ; and that, although we justly deserve and fear the wrath of God on account of our sins, yet, we might have a full assurance of salvation, by faith and trust in this Mediator. And when we have thus kissed, and worshipped, and adored this Son, the Father is satisfied, and demands nothing farther of us, for reconciliation with him, and the attainment of the hope of salvation and eternal life. And all the obedience which follows this, even though it be imperfect, yet, as it is performed from a principle of faith in God, is well-pleasing unto him, and is rewarded with both corporal and spiritual blessings.

This then is simply and plainly the sum of all true religion. In this manner must the mind and heart be changed that we may judge rightly of God. We cannot judge rightly of him out of our own heart, but out of the Word only which the Son of God sets before us. But the world will not hear and obey this : they will change any thing rather than their own hearts and consciences, and will rather adore any thing than this King. The monk thinks that he performs the greatest of all worship to God when he changes his garments, leaves his calling in life, and hides himself in a monastery, where he eats, drinks, and sleeps, &c. in a new and singular way. And he imagines that by these means he becomes a new man and born again. Whereas, it is only the external garment that is changed, the mind and heart remain just the same ; the sacrilegious opinion concerning God remains the same as it was in wicked Cain, who, when he meditated the murder of his brother, hoped that he

should be still in favour with God on account of the sacrifice which he offered.

But this is a most wicked and sacrilegious opinion, for God regards not circumcision nor any such ceremony: even as he careth not whether thou walkest or runnest in thy journey, or whether thou clothest thyself with a black garment or a white one. All these are external things, which each one may manage just as he thinks best, provided that, he have always a regard that he offend not his neighbour thereby. And so also God careth not whether thou be in political or civil life, or in a desert: excepting that, it is open wickedness to leave thy calling and choose out to thyself of thy own accord some other singular way of life.

But God's command and precept is, that thou change thy heart, that thou have in thy conscience a right thought and opinion concerning God: and that thou say, I acknowledge and reverence the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, as my Mediator, I hope that I am reconciled to God, and that my sins are pardoned. And with this heart I will go and dig my field, follow my occupation, marry a wife, and serve my master, &c. This is the kind of worship that this Psalm requires, and this is the kind of religion that it prescribes.

But, as I said, the world will not receive sound doctrine. They judge that to be true religion when thou changest any outward thing or clothing. As some in our day imagine that they are true saints if they never take up arms, if they put on a black garment, if they go with their heads hanging down, &c. But are not these things easy to be changed by any common person? But to trust in Christ, and to serve the Lord in fear,—this is what every foolish and vain one cannot attain unto.

But it is certain that no one among men who devotes himself to laws or self-righteousnesses can ever perform this true worship: he cannot attain unto it even in thought: it is a doctrine revealed from heaven, which never grows naturally in any human heart or head: the Holy Ghost himself must teach and reveal it. And

as this worship and the knowledge of it are only attained unto by faith in Christ, and as self-justiciaries always cast away faith and hold fast the law, it is impossible for any such self-justiciary to attain unto it.

The Christian religion, therefore, as I said, is most easy if you look at the outward works of it: but if you look at the spiritual worship contained in it, it is most difficult and odious to attain unto. For this worship cannot be performed unless the heart be changed. True religion, therefore, requires the heart and mind, and not riches nor any external thing: though these, perhaps, may follow if thou have first a good and right heart: for where the right heart is, there are all things: he that loves you in reality, will not deny you his money, nor his service, nor himself. And this is the reason why the true religion is without hypocrisy, and without dissimulation, and is not like that pharisaical religion which only changes external things, and not the heart.

Therefore, the true worship of God is to kiss the Son: that is, to adore him, and to see nothing either in heaven or earth out of him, nor trust in any thing besides him: as the first precept commands, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth." By this commandment the Lord brought his people into a spiritual captivity, and a spiritual sight, and drew them away from all vague cogitations. And yet, after all they fell into idolatry, as their history shews. For they concluded thus,—that God was pleased when the creature was praised which he created. Hence followed the idolatrous worship of the sun, moon, and all the army of heaven: whereas God had expressly commanded, that they should worship him alone before the mercy-seat.

In this same way also, let us beware of worshipping any images of the heaven or the earth, and cleave unto the Son only, for thus we shall certainly find and be reconciled unto the Father and the whole Godhead. Thus Paul saith, that in Christ "All the Godhead dwelleth bodily." Therefore, thou wilt not find God in the sun,

nor the moon, nor in any other creature, but in the Son only, who was born of the Virgin Mary. In him alone is salvation, grace, and life; and whatever you form in your imagination out of Christ, is a vain imagination and mere idolatry.

This the papists know not. Whenever these, therefore, teach any thing concerning the worship, they either say nothing about any worship, but some forms which they themselves have formed and chosen: or, where they are in the least of their error, they lead men away to Moses and an obedience unto the law and the Ten Commandments.

But those that look at Christ find such a God as they need not fear, but such an one as they may embrace with reverence, and with a confidence in his mercy. As, therefore, the holy Jews knew no other God than him who commanded them to worship him before his mercy-seat; and as they knew no other kind of worship but that which was performed in the temple, and commanded of God himself; so, we cleave to the Son alone, and in him we find the Father, and we have salvation and eternal life. This is our wisdom who are Christians: we restrain all the wandering thoughts of our hearts, and cleave to the Son only: nor do we know any other God out of the Son. For the Son being exalted draws all things unto himself. All they, therefore, who know not, or who lose him, are tossed about on the sea of damnation, and cannot get into the haven of salvation. On the other hand, all who have Christ, and who look on him, as on the brazen serpent, with a fixed eye; that is, who believe with a steady faith that he was offered up for our sins,—all these are safe and free from Satan, and in possession of the true God, and eternal wisdom, righteousness, and life.

There is, therefore, a peculiar force in the expression "Kiss the Son:" its ignifies, Embrace ye the Son with your whole heart, and look at, and hear nothing else besides Christ and him crucified. He that looks, therefore, at any thing else in religion, or seeks any thing higher, he will err, and wander from the way of salvation.



We may use our reason and wisdom in all other things, in governing our family, in following our employments, and in buying and selling: but when we are seeking after the true worship of God, here, we are to shut out all other ways of reason's forming, and cleave unto this Son only.

“Lest he be angry and ye perish in the way.”—The prophet saw that this “way” would be despised in the world. And thus the Jews, the Turks, and all the nations judge it a most absurd thing in us to worship a Man who sustained all the common passions of the flesh which other men endure, nay, who was numbered among transgressors and nailed to the cross.

The papists, although they are not offended at this infirmity in Christ, yet teach another way of life besides believing in Christ's life and his works. They detract nothing from the sacrifice of Christ and his merits, yet they ascribe the merit of the remission of sins to their own works and deserts. Do they not then thereby make another Christ, besides him whom the Father has appointed for us, to be our righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption? Therefore, instead of the ‘kiss’ which the Holy Ghost here commands to be given unto Christ alone, they kiss their masses, their fasts, and their hoods; but they kiss Christ with the kiss of Judas, for they hate this his doctrine, and persecute him with every kind of cruelty. This, the Holy Ghost sees, and therefore he gives this advice and threatening; saying, either adore this Son, or know that ye are under wrath. For if ye are considering how God must be appeased, and how the remission of sins must be obtained; know this, that ye must either kiss the Son, or perish for ever. There is no medium.

Thus John declares, “He that believeth not the Son the wrath of God abideth on him.” And again, “He that believeth not is condemned already.” Whether he be a king, a pastor, a monk, a soldier, a married man or a single man, a physician or a lawyer, if he kiss not the Son, that is, if he do not place all his hope of salvation in the Son, even though he should wear out his body with

fasting unto death, and give his body to be burned, he shall perish in the wrath of God.

Thus does the Holy Spirit include in this one expression the whole world with all its wisdom, righteousness, merits, worship, adoration, and affliction, and makes all to consist in kissing the Son. If, says he, ye kiss the Son, well! but if not, ye shall perish under wrath. For the Son will at length be angry. He now offers you an opportunity of kissing him. He has a singular love for the human race, for he came down and took our flesh upon him, not that he might judge or condemn us, but that he might kiss us, and shew us the love with which he embraces us: if, therefore, ye do not kiss him, no religion, no righteousness, no wisdom shall save you: but ye shall surely remain under wrath and there perish. But the world regards not these threats; they think that the reverse will be the case; they hope in the mercy of God through their own works and righteousness: but in vain, for the whole is settled, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

The LXX. have rendered the passage, "Lest ye perish from the right way." And therefore, interpreters have made different ways, the right and the wrong, and distinguished them. But all this is contrary to the Hebrew: for we have it there simply, "And so ye perish from the way." The meaning is, therefore, that the Holy Spirit forbids us to trust in any ways of our own, though they may seem to be the best and the most specious. The kingdom of the Pope has a most powerfully attractive appearance with it. All civil laws and rites are deservedly celebrated as singular gifts of God, and necessary for the public peace and tranquillity. The Carthusian monk has a certain splendid manner to which he forms his life. And so also other orders of monks have other ways. But whatever of this there is throughout the whole world, the whole of it, unless thou kiss the Son, is nothing but a state of wrath and damnation; and wrath shall in the end drive them all to perdition. And if the religion of that ancient people could not stand when they rejected and despised this Son; if they, to

whom were intrusted the oracles of God, the legal dispensation, the divinely instituted worship, the priesthood; — if they, I say, perished together with their way, what shall we say of our chosen ones of the present day, who form to themselves ways without the Word of God, such as the papists?

There is, therefore, a peculiar force in the expression “in the way.” He does not say, ye shall perish in error, but “in the way:” that is, all the ways of worship which they have formed, and all the self-chosen works which they have wrought for the procuring of their own salvation shall prove their destruction. And a miserable thing it is, that the monk who has done nothing else day and night but afflict his body, should gain nothing else for all his pain and toil, but to be cast into hell fire!

Thus also the Jews, while they contend with great zeal for their law and sacrifices, have a way of their own, in which they think they are going straight on towards eternal life, but in this very way they perish: so that the whole of their “way” is but an error both of mind and body.

And so also the Roman Empire had its own way, in which they thought that every peril could be surmounted. But all these, as they did not kiss the Son, perished in, and together with their way.—And in the same way also, by the blessing of God, we see the Pope perishing at this day before our eyes, together with his various ways. For the anger of this Son is a divine anger, and has a power: it is not a vain anger, and which has not power to execute its design: he will be held and worshipped as God, or he will bring destruction.

And this also increases the terribleness of this threatening, when the Holy Spirit adds, ‘that this anger is kindled in a moment.’ For here he embraces both, shewing, that this anger is almighty, and also always nigh at hand. When it ceases, or is not actually executing its design, it seems to be very far off, and not only to those who do not experience it, but also to the godly, who are under their tribulation and affliction. But it is

still as sure as ever that this anger is kindled in a moment: it will most assuredly come, and come, when they shall say, peace and safety. Thus the Jews did not think that their destruction was so near. So, in our time also, the Pope began to fall when he was most secure. And I know not what hope it is that now nourishes and supports the enemies of the Gospel. But it shall surely come to pass according to the scriptures, "The wicked shall not live out half his days." And another cause also of all this destruction and ruin, is, that, although the Son himself is one whose wrath is kindled in a moment, yet, the godly also ply him with their entreaties and supplications. And therefore, as Christ says concerning the widow and the unjust judge, 'God also shall avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him; and shall avenge them speedily.' And so also it is said in the Revelation, that the plagues and destruction shall come suddenly.

But in the mean time to us who suffer, this anger seems long and slow in coming, 'For hope delayed maketh the heart sick.' But to the wicked the coming of it is speedy and in a moment, for they are then suddenly overwhelmed when they think themselves to be most safe. Hence they perish, as it were, in an instant. Though while they are now hearing these awful threatenings they securely despise them. Thus, there is a fable related of a certain robber, which says, that when he was plundering a certain traveller, and the traveller cried out that he would be punished at the last day of judgment. O! says the robber, if punishment is not to be till then, I shall do well enough. And therefore, upon this hope, in addition to thy cloak, give me thy coat also.—And just such as this man are all the wicked: but when punishment lays hold upon them, then they sing this foolish note, 'I could never have thought it.' Thus the people of Sodom even loaded Lot with reproaches and revilings when he faithfully admonished them of their danger. 'Thou camest in to sojourn among us, and wilt thou now rule over us?' They were secure and regardless of all admonition. But

when the sun rose in the morning they were all swallowed up with earthquakes and fire from heaven. This auger, therefore, shews itself by coming in a moment, and before the wicked have any expectation or idea of it.

This, therefore, is a most terrible threatening and full of alarm; and it would have fallen heavy upon us all, at least in thought, if the Holy Spirit had not added a necessary consolation. For he now makes a distinction between those who kiss the Son, and those who kiss him not. They, therefore, that will not kiss this Son, but who are puffed up with their own righteousness,—with these he will be wrath, and to these he threatens destruction. But they that kiss the Son, who fear because of their sins, and yet, conceive hope in and through the Son of God,—these, saith the Holy Spirit, are “blessed!”

Thus also the angels at the sepulchre of our Lord made this difference, when they said unto the women who were afraid, “Fear not.” For they did not come to frighten those trembling ones, who loved Christ, and were then seeking him. But they came to terrify the guards who were serving the pharisees and high-priests, and helping them to suppress the Christian religion. As, therefore, the persons and characters differ, so the words and expressions that are applied to them differ also. The proclamation of mercy belongs to the lost and afflicted: for these are they that are to be raised up. But the declaration of wrath and punishment belongs to the hard and the secure: these are they who are to be broken in pieces with the hammer of the law.

Thus there are, as it were, two worlds. The one belongs to the devil; in which there are the men that are secure, proud, and despisers of God and his Gospel. These the Holy Spirit admonishes to put off their security, and declares, that if they do not, they shall perish in their way. The other world belongs to Christ: in which are they that are afflicted and in trouble, and who are in distress on account of the sense of their sins, and fear the punishment of them,—the wrath of God and eternal death! And yet, as they see the Son of God

made a sacrifice for their sins, they conceive a hope of mercy. These the Holy Spirit consoles and comforts with this sweet word, "Blessed are they that hope, (or trust,) in him."

And he teaches them at the same time concerning the true worship of God,—that to worship God is nothing more or less than to put all your trust in this King, and to depend on his aid and help against all sin, death, and Satan. This expression, therefore, "they that trust," explains what was meant by the "kiss," which he spoke before. As if he had said, 'Look to this King: be joyful and happy, and anoint your hearts with sweet thoughts concerning God, through this Son, who is thus set before you by God the Father, that ye may kiss him. For whatever of other things there are in the world, that can only distress you, it can bring no consolation or help against death or sin; no not even the most sanctified life, the best works, nor all your own righteousness put together. But in this Son ye will find a fountain of salvation, and of all consolation. Therefore, not only hope in him, but assure yourselves that ye are blessed, while ye hope in him.

In this manner, therefore, does this Psalm set forth the heavenly religion, the true worship, and the true church, and Christ its head. And it shews, that, although the church lies hidden in the world, and although Satan, and the wicked, and our own flesh also, seem to have the dominion; yet the church shall, by faith in this King, at length conquer and triumph over Satan and the world: according to this sweet declaration, "BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT TRUST IN HIM!"—In the midst therefore of all the tribulations and difficulties by which the church is at this day oppressed and surrounded, and with which she is conflicting, let us also hold fast the consolation here given us,—that while we trust in Christ the Son of God, we are pronounced "BLESSED!" Amen!

THE END.

# TO THE FRIENDS

OF

## THE PUBLICATION.



AS this Publication is now completed, the Translator desires to observe, that he deems it advisable not to proceed any farther with his publication of Luther's Works, for the present, and here takes leave of his Friends, for a time. He wishes to say, however, that it is not his design to cease wholly from his Translation of the remains of the immortal Luther: for, in becoming more acquainted with him, he finds that there are yet, untranslated, many of his productions which are calculated to be essentially profitable to the Church.—Among these are, more especially, his separate and particular Commentaries on the 90th and 45th Psalms: and also, a small and complete Work on the whole Book of Psalms, giving the subject-matter, experiences, spiritual exercises, history, design, &c. of each separate Psalm: thus forming a very concise and useful Manual, or book of reference, to which the reader may with much profit apply previous to his meditating on any one Psalm: and perhaps there is no other work of the kind extant, written by an author under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.—There is also, his Exposition of Daniel viii. 23, 24, 25, giving a most clear, striking, and powerful description of ANTICHRIST and the Roman Church.—There is, moreover, his valuable Commentary on the Book of Genesis, the last but

one, and the most matured, monument of his pen. This work cost him ten years' labour, and was finished three years before his death. The translation of it will occupy about five volumes.

Though the Translator, therefore, ceases publishing his Translation any farther, for the present; yet, he designs still to go on with that employment privately, (if time shall be set apart for the purpose,) until he shall have completed the whole of the above remains of Luther. And at some period in the next year, (if nothing unforeseen prevent,) he purposes to bring forth the 90th and 45th Psalms, and the Manual on the Book of Psalms; forming one volume octavo, to match the volumes already published; or, perhaps, the Manual only, in a small book by itself, comprising about three numbers, or, the Exposition of Daniel separately, comprising about three numbers: and when those works shall appear, either in numbers, or in one volume, he will make farther mention of the Commentary on the Book of Genesis.

Under these circumstances, therefore, the Friends of the present Publication may either withdraw their names, as Subscribers, now, and renew them at a future period, (if they shall be so disposed,) or continue them until the proposed works shall appear.

FEBRUARY 1, 1826.













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